THE CROSBY VOICE

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THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY

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Hello again,
or more correctly, I should say "Hello at last"! I'm truly sorry to have taken so long to produce this issue of The Crosby Voice but finding the time has been absolutely impossible until now.

I'd like to start off with an announcement that gives me much pleasure. As you will know, the post of Vice-President has been vacant since the sad passing of Ken Orren next year. At our AGM last October it was unanimously agreed the position should go in an honorary capacity to the man who has made an enormous contribution to making the Crosby Voice what it is today - VERNON WESLEY TAYLOR of Portland, Oregon in the USA. Congratulations Vern, I know that this will be a big surprise to you but I wanted you to read it in the pages to which you have given so much, including this issue.

Overseas readers will be unaware of the traumas through which the VBCS has been going through in recent times, all due to the magic word "money". Without going into the long boring details, our expenses have risen to the point where the continued existence of the Society was in serious doubt. After local membership surveys, meetings, etc, it was decided to do two things: i) To raise all membership fees, and ii) To cut back the Crosby Voice (the main source of our financial problems) to two issues a year. I'm sorry for those members whose only contact with the club is the magazine but, as you can see from this issue, we're making it bigger and better than ever to compensate. Thank you to all those members who gave us fund-raising suggestions. Space restrictions make it impossible to list them all here or to acknowledge everyone who took the time to write in. Thank you also to all those members who added a little 'something extra' with their membership fees. If I didn't thank you personally, I do apologise, but as anyone can tell you, I am a terrible correspondent!

Enough of that. A few highlights from this 70 page issue:
* Page 3: Unheard Bing radio tracks from the mid-30's are about to be issued on an LP. Vern Taylor tells you about them.
* Pages 4 - 17: New CDs continue to pour out. (Yours truly has over forty full Crosby discs already.) It takes 13 pages to list them all this issue.
* Page 23: BINGthings Society has started in the USA. Read Bob Lundberg's letter telling all about it.
* Page 26/27: For one enterprising company, 1989 was a green Christmas.
* Page 28: A real collectors' item from Vern Taylor. Part of the scripted score with interpolated dialogue from Bing's film A CONNECTICUT YANKEE. This rare document gives you a fascinating insight into movie techniques.
* Page 33: A self-explanatory letter to Keith Parkinson of the 'Victor' Bing Crosby Society from the Palace Theatre in the UK. Sounds interesting.
* Page 40: How many Crosby magazines would feature an article on FRANK SINATRA?! However, I think you'll find Leigh Brown's efforts good reading.
* Page 50: Remember the Hollywood Palace TV series? We reproduce a typical programme handed out to the studio audience at the time.
* Page 57: By now you'll know that Bing's son Lindsay took his own life last December. Whilst an unpleasant topic, we don't make it any less so by ignoring it.
* Page 62: You may have heard of 'The Westwood Marching and Chowder Club'. Vern Taylor has supplied us with some rare documentation of one of their meetings.
And that's just a sample folks. Over page we start with Future Functions.

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FUTURE FUNCTIONS

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(Although our February and April meetings will be ancient history by the time that overseas members get this issue, I thought that we'd include them to show you what you've missed!)

MONDAY FEBRUARY 26TH
RHYTHM ON THE RIVER plus the 1988 IRVING BERLIN TRIBUTE CONCERT

MONDAY APRIL 30TH
WE'RE NOT DRESSING plus DR COOK'S GARDEN

MONDAY JUNE 25TH
BIRTH OF THE BLUES plus ELSTREE CALLING.
Bing's movie needs no introduction but our support feature will be of interest to movie historians. This rare early British review features a variety of artists including Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge, Will Fyffe and Lily Morris. Even Alfred Hitchcock was involved. Some sequences also feature the original frame-by-frame hand tinted colour!

MONDAY AUGUST 13TH
PENNIES FROM HEAVEN plus THE MILLS BROTHERS STORY.
It's been a while since we screened this famous 1936 Crosby movie which features Louis Armstrong, so we're giving it another go round. 'The Mills Brothers Story' is a recent US TV documentary which combines interviews with the brothers over the years plus some quite rare footage going back to the early 1930s. You'll really enjoy this one!

MONDAY OCTOBER 8TH
MISSISSIPPI is among the most popular Crosby movies we show, not only because Bing is in wonderful voice but because W.C. Fields also stars. As support, we'll be screening a selection of Bing from television including a Jack Benny show from the mid-1950s in which he guests with George Burns.

MONDAY DECEMBER 3RD
HIGH SOCIETY is often on TV but so many members asked to see it on the big screen that we're happy to oblige. At this stage, the support hasn't been chosen but we'll let you know in plenty of time.

THE VENUE
As always, our venue will be the theatrette of the AMP Building, corner Bourke and William Streets, city.

Starting time for all functions is 7.30pm sharp but as regulars can tell you, it pays to get there early, especially as any new records that we get in from overseas are quickly snapped up.

Entry costs, unfortunately, have had to go up to cover the cost in the increase in AMP charges.

MEMBERS: $6 PENSIONERS & STUDENTS: $4 NON-MEMBERS: $6

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EXCITING NEWS - A MAJOR NEW CROSBY ISSUE
"RECENTLY DISCOVERED EARLY SOLOS"
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By Vernon Wesley Taylor

Sometime ago, here in the Crosby Voice, mention was made that several songs by Bing Crosby that most of the collectors had never heard of were located. Now it would appear that they will - at last - be made available to the general public as a regular issue.

The details of their being found by Russell R. Rullman and of the vast amount of work in trying to restore them will be in the recording's cover notes but it be said here that Russell, with a little help from Bill Osborn and your very lucky reporter, uncovered more than a dozen, intact, complete renditions by Bing and another dozen or so Bing singing with other celebrities. Sadly, although a number of other were found in the cache, they are nothing but bits of starts and stops that were never placed on the privately-made transcriptions.

Though I am aware of the reticence of one Bing Crosby Collector to let his name be used in public, I simply must tell you that Gordon Wall of Seaton, South Australia took the best examples I was able to give him of these long-lost songs by Bing and laboured over them like a mother bear cleaning her cubs. Even this was not enough, for Gordon then managed to obtain digital remasterings of them, before he sent them on their hopeful way into the future where all of us will be able to have good regular-issue (and therefore more official and collectible) copies of them for our Bing Crosby Collections.

You will read more about them later, but I can mention some of them: DESIRE is a poignant and beautiful number, sung by Bing in that younger voice of his; all the range and whispery huskiness he was so quickly famous for. Another is MOON OVER MIAMI. And there are also YOU and ONE NIGHT IN MONTE CARLO besides many others.

I have been assured they will be made available soon. Although this collection to be released are all solos by Bing, perhaps - if they can be persuaded that it would be worth their time, money and effort, the duets Bing made with others might also be brought out. You might write and let us know how you feel.

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NEW RELEASES
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The CD avalanche continues unabated with more and more original LP issues turning up in the new medium. We've also seen our first Crosby CD single (shown opposite, actual size) which was widely available in Melbourne last Christmas. Actually, 'single' is a misnomer because CDs have no 'A' or 'B' side and in fact, this disc has four tracks, the same as the old EP which has been re-named the 'fourplay' in these enlightened nineties!

For the record, this disc features White Christmas, Silent Night, Jingle Bells and Adeste Fidelis and was produced in Germany. Cost was $6.99 and we presume it will be available again next season.

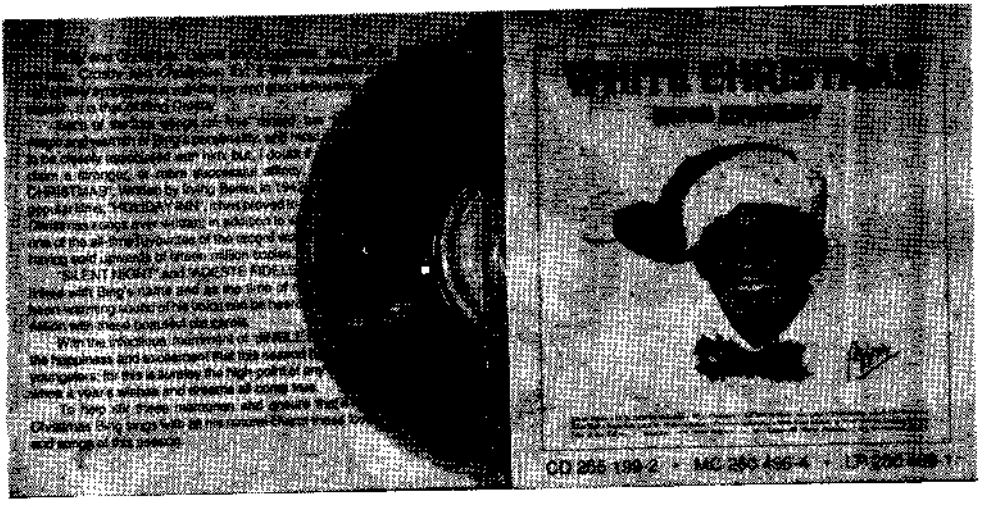
GOLDEN GATE COLLECTION - 16 ORIGINAL WORLD HITS - MCA 8.62008 LZ
Another German import, this CD is also available in Melbourne at a reasonable $14.99. I've only played it once, but I'd swear that the take used of 'Amor' is different from the usual, yet only one take is listed in all the discographies. Sound quality is excellent - MCA always gets it right - no extraneous echo or other 'reprocessing'. As most of the tracks have not yet appeared on CD, this is a most welcome issue.

Contents: Deep in the heart of Texas, Poinciana, San Fernando Valley, Amor, Long ago and far away, You belong to my heart, Chattanooga shoe shine boy, A gal in calico, Sioux City Sue, Ballerina, Moonlight bay, In a little Spanish town, Mule train, Riders in the sky, La Vie en rose, Sympathy.

BING CROSBY & FRIENDS - MAGIC (UK) - DAWE 3
A collection of radio tracks, all of which I'm sure have been on LP before and all of which feature Bing with other artists: Dearie (Ethel Merman), Lazybones (Louis Armstrong), The Wedding Samba (Andrews Sisters), Lonesome in the saddle (Fred Allen), Just the way you are (Judy Garland), Yes sir that's my baby (Firehouse 5 + 2), Yakka Hula Hicky Dula (Al Jolson), Enjoy yourself (Bob Crosby), Have I told you lately that I love you (Bob Hope), Play a simple melody (Groucho Marx), Hello my baby/In my merry Oldsmobile/ Call me up some rainy afternoon/Walking my baby back home (Judy Garland), Blueberry hill (Louis Armstrong), To prove that I'm in love (Patti Page), Lily of Laguna/Goodbyee (Beatrice Lillie & Alec Templeton).

CHRISTMAS WITH BING - PICKWICK (UK) - PWKS 561
Despite the cover, this is the most welcome Crosby Christmas compilation in years. Thanks to well-known British collector Leslie Gaylor (who receives credit on the liner notes), the majority of tracks are those that are rarely reissued on LP, let alone CD! The only disappointment is Silent Night which comes from the Musical Autobiography set. I'm surprised that neither of the 1935 versions were used - they've never been reissued.

The contents: Christmas is a-comin, Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer, Sleigh ride, Deck the halls/That Christmas feeling/I'd like to hitch a ride with Santa Claus (with the 4 Crosby boys), That Christmas feeling, Looks like a cold cold winter, I heard the bells on Christmas day, Silent night,


WHITE CHRISTMAS
CD 255 199-2 • MC 255 496-4 • LP 255 499-1

16 ORIGINAL WORLD HITS
COLLECTION
Bing Crosby
Deep In The Heart Of Texas • Painciana • Amor
A Gal In Calico • Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy • La Vie En Rose
Moonlight Bay • In A Little Spanish Town

CROSBY
& Friends

CHRISTMAS
WITH
BING

The first snowfall, A marshmallow world, Snow, Sleigh bell serenade, Is Christmas only a tree, Little Jack Frost get lost, The snowman/That Christmas feeling/I'd like to hitch a ride with Santa Claus (with the 4 Crosby boys), Happy Holiday.

BING CROSBY'S CHRISTMAS CLASSICS - CAPITOL (US) - CDP 7 91009 2
BING CROSBY - I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS - AXIS (Australia) CDAX 260300
Here's an interesting couple of CDs that were available last Christmas. Both were sold next to each other in the record racks and both for the same price: $14.99. Both are reissues of Bing's 1964 Warner Brothers LP 'I Wish You a Merry Christmas' except that the imported Capitol release omits one track - 'Pat-a-pan/While Shepherds watched their sheep'. Buyer beware!

The other ten tracks: Winter wonderland, Have yourself a merry little Christmas, What child is this/The Holly & the ivy, Little drummer boy, Let it snow (x3), Hark the herald angels sing/It came upon a midnight clear, Frosty the snowman, I wish you a merry Christmas.

BLUE SKIES - MCA (US) - MCAD - 25989
Don't hold your breath, but there's half a chance that MCA in the USA may issue more in the old Bing's Hollywood series. Blue Skies is identical to the original LP, even down to the cover notes. Sound is excellent.

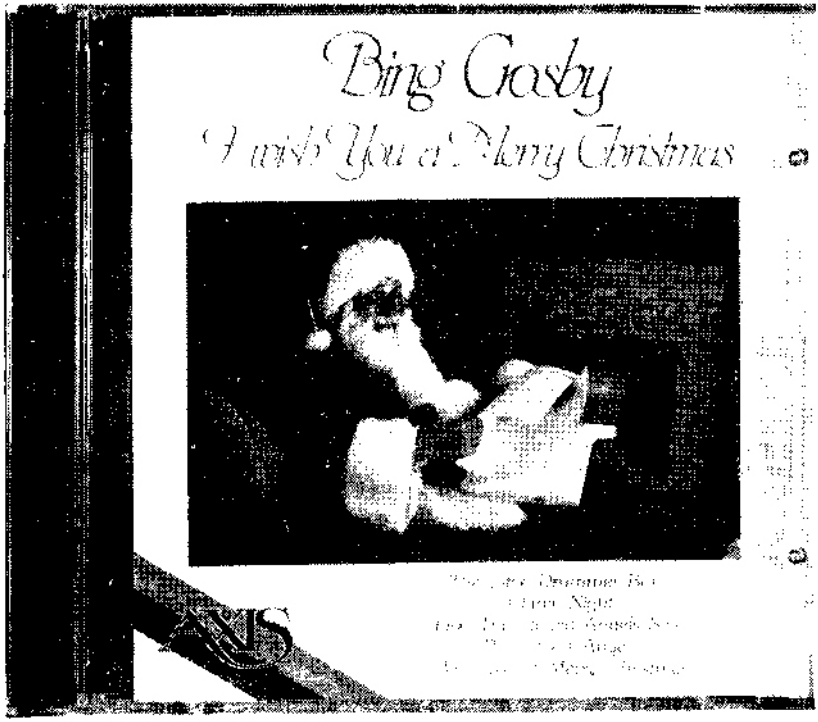
Contents: Blue skies, All by Myself, A couple of song and dance men, I've got my captain working for me now, CUBA, Getting nowhere, Everybody step, You keep coming back like a song, A serenade to an old-fashioned girl, I'd rather be me, Out of this world, June comes around every year.

BING CROSBY - RCA (Australia) BPCD 5092
Heaven knows what the casual purchaser would make of this locally-pressed CD. It features (and mixes) Crosby tracks from 1927 and 1930/31 (including two from radio) with those from 1957's 'Bing with a beat'. Talk about different music styles and recording techniques, to say nothing of the vastly different Crosby voice! Oh well, we shouldn't complain.

Contents: Ol' man river, Three little words, It must be true, Wrap your troubles, Just a gigolo, I'm thru with love, Just one more chance, Some sunny day, I'm gonna sit right down and write myself a letter, Mack the knife, Dream a little dream of me, Whispering, Down among the sheltering palms, The little things in life, One more time, Them there eyes.

NEW TRICKS - DECCA (Japan) 25P2-2833
This is a fascinating CD from Japan - fascinating because both cover and disc feature the original 1950s Decca label, long defunct. However, what makes this issue great for collectors is not only does it include the original 12 tracks but two bonus tracks: 'More than you know' which was recorded but never issued at the time (later yes, but not in the 50s), plus 'Rain' which of course was a single around the same time.

Bing Crosby's


Bing Crosby
I wish You a Merry Christmas

blue skies

BING
CROSBY
RIOLA
EXPRESS
A LITTLE DREAM OF ME
GOLD
THE KNIFE, OL' MAN RIVER

The other tracks: When I take my sugar to tea, On the Alamo, I'm confessin', Between the devil and the deep blue sea, Georgia on my mind, Chicago, You're driving me crazy, Avalon, Chinatown my Chinatown, If I could be with you, Softly as in a morning sunrise, Alabamy bound.

PAUL WHITEMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA - THE VICTOR MASTERS - RCA (USA) 9678-2-R

Bing features on 8 of the 20 tracks on this American CD which covers Whiteman tracks from 1927 to 1935. Sound quality is best on the earlier recordings, probably because they have been reissued so often. Some of the later tracks are a bit noisy because they were taken off slightly worn 78s. Actually, I'm surprised that Whiteman's 1930s output has been largely ignored by re-issuers. Although no longer the 'King of Jazz', Whiteman did produce some good discs in that decade.

Contents: Lovable, Back in your own backyard, Changes, Washboard blues, Lonely melody, I'm coming Virginia, San, Make Believe, OL' man river, Dardanella, You took advantage of me, Mississippi mud, From Monday on, We just couldn't say goodbye, Nobody's sweetheart, Fare the well to Harlem, I'll never be the same, I guess I'll have to change my plan, Ain't misbehavin', Christmas night in Harlem.

FANCY MEETING YOU HERE - RCA (Japan) - R25J-1003

Another welcome reissue from Japan, again using the original cover art. Quality is excellent.

Contents: Fancy meeting you here, On a slow boat to China, I can't get started, Hindustan, It happened in Monterey/You came along way from St Louis/You can take the boy out of the country, Love won't let you get away, How about you, Brazil/Here we are, Isle of Capri, Say 'si si', Calcutta, Love won't let you get away.

BING CROSBY - THE COLLECTION - OBJECT ENTERPRISES (UK) - OR0084

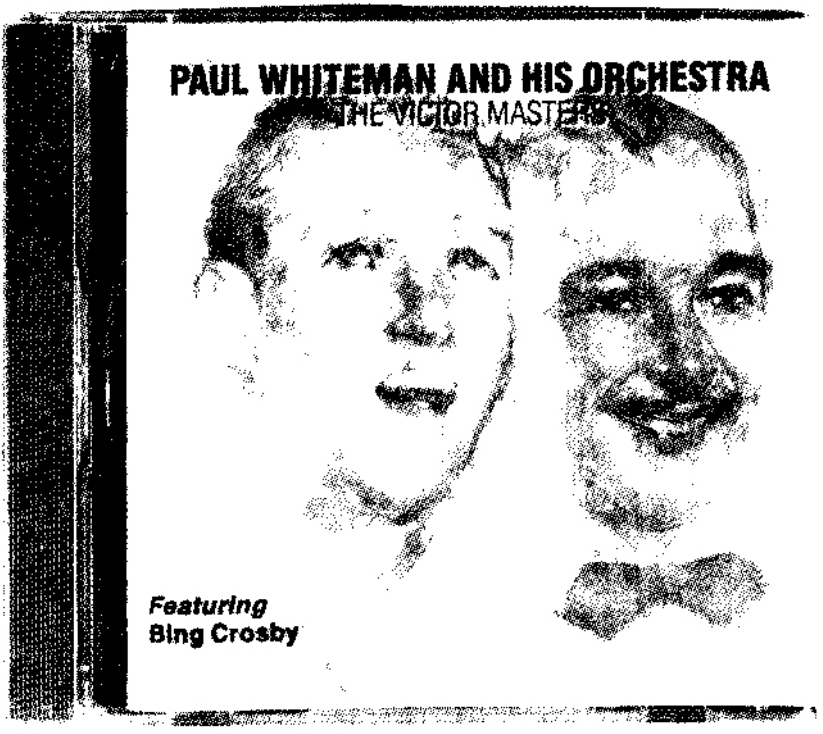
This CD, one of a series featuring old records by various artists, features (yet again) Bing's 1931 output. As this same material has been covered already on CD in the UK (where this record comes from), you wonder why anyone would bother. I'm told that this disc has been sighted here although I am yet to see it.

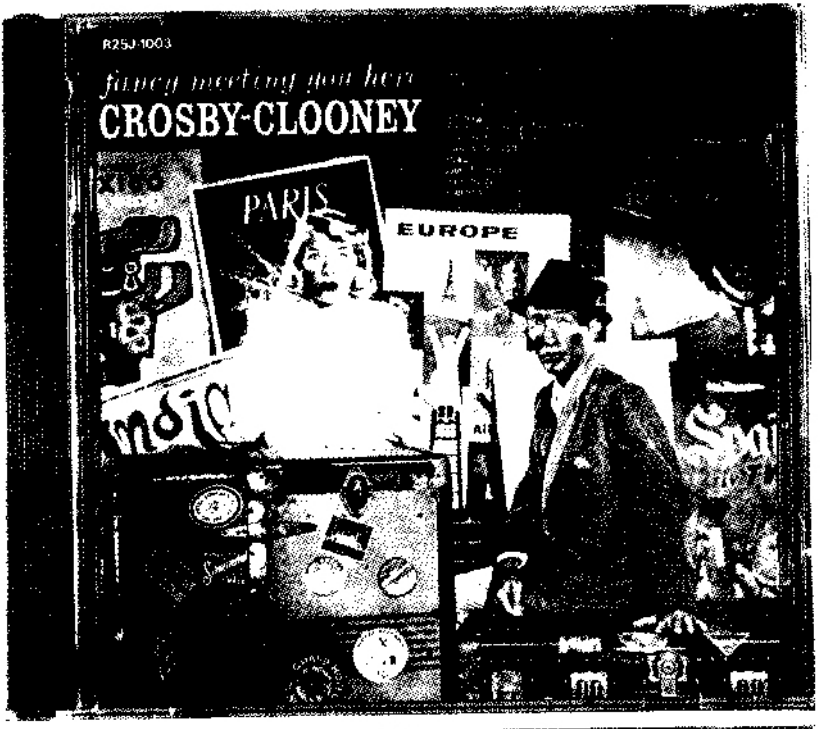
Contents: Blue of the night, Million dollar baby, At your command, Dancing in the dark, Too late, Sweet & lovely, Faded Summer love, Just one more chance, I'm through with love, Out of nowhere, Goodnight Sweetheart, I apologize, Stardust, Wrap your troubles, Just a gigolo, I surrender dear, If you should ever need me.

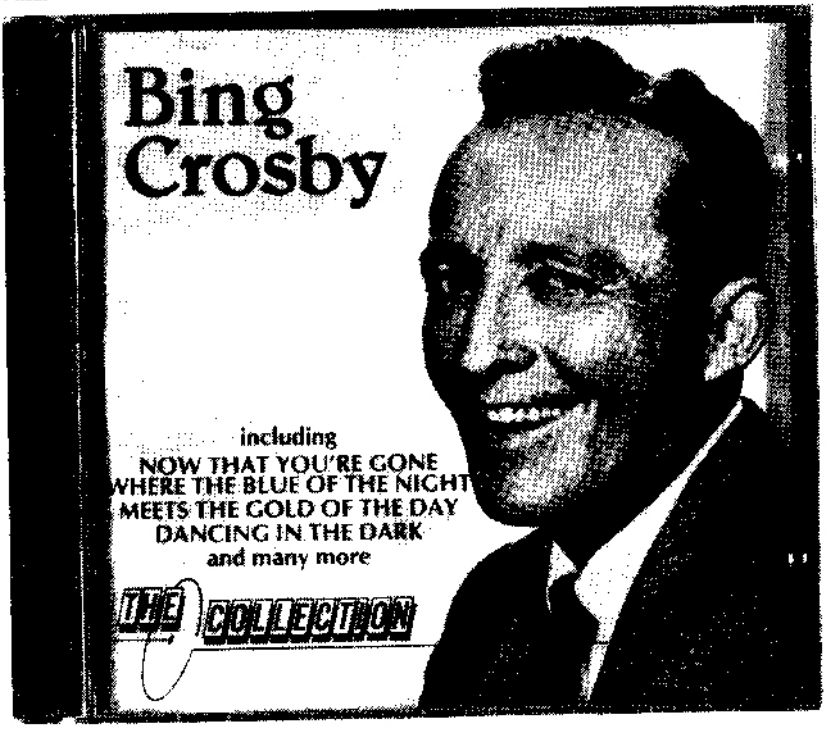
CLASSIC CROSBY - ABC RECORDS (Australia) 838 985-1

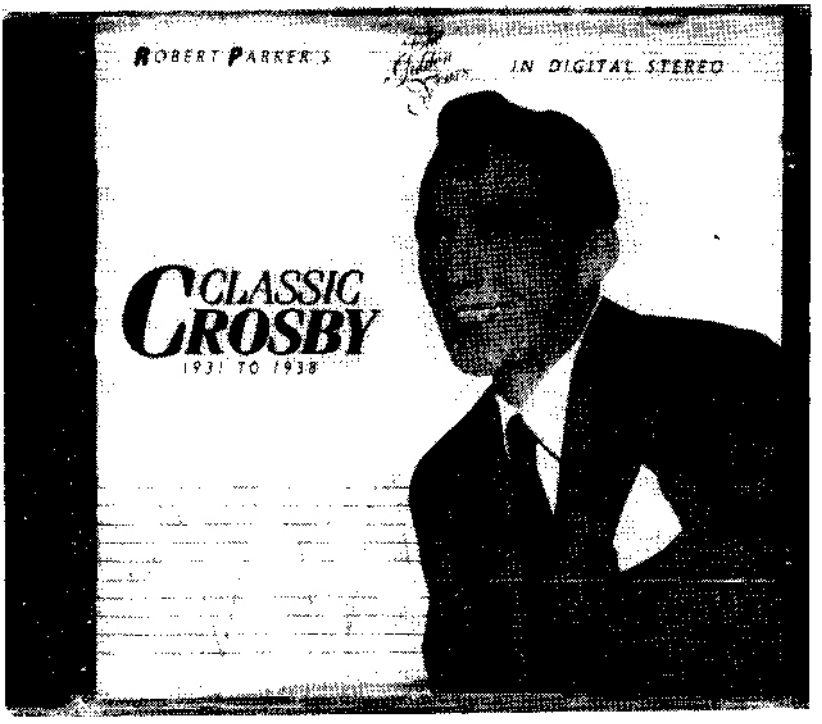
This recent local release, also available on LP and cassette, is the latest in the Robert Parker 'The Golden Years In Digital Stereo' series. There are 18 Crosby tracks ranging from the often reissued to the rarely reissued. A fair bit of echo has been added, so be warned if this bothers you.

Bing Crosby


PAUL WHITEMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA
THE VICTOR MASTERS
Featuring
Bing Crosby


R25J-1003
fancy meeting you here
CROSBY-CLOONEY
PARIS
EUROPE


Bing
Crosby
including
NOW THAT YOU'RE GONE
WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT
MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY
DANCING IN THE DARK
and many more
THE COLLECTION


ROBERT PARKER'S
IN DIGITAL STEREO
CLASSIC
CROSBY
1931 TO 1938

AMERICAN LEGENDS
POCKETFUL
OF DREAMS
BING
CROSBY
ORIGINAL RECORDINGS • DIGITALLY RESTORED

Contents: Sweet Georgia Brown, How deep is the ocean, Dinah, Love thy neighbour, Once in a blue moon, Goodnight lovely little lady, May I, My honey's loving arms, Home on the range, You've got me crying again, After sundown, Some of these days, Shadows of love, Basin street blues, Me and the moon, Sail along silv'ry moon, I'm falling in love with someone, A blues serenade.

POCKETFUL OF DREAMS - PRO-ARTE (USA) - CDD 457

Pro-Arte seem to be specialising in a wide range of re-issue material, much of which is available in Melbourne. This, their latest Crosby release, features 18 tracks. No surprises, but at least they left on Eddie Cantor's spoken introduction to 'Alexander's Ragtime Band'!

Contents: Learn to croon, Stardust, It must be true, St Louis Blues, Shine, Brother can you spare a dime, You're getting to be a habit with me, I'm through with love, Wrap your troubles in dreams, The day you came along, My honey's lovin arms, I've got to pass your house, Love thy neighbour, A fine romance, Alexander's ragtime band, Small fry, I've got a pocketful of dreams.

PERSONALITIES ON PARADE - VOL 4 - CANADA

Just in case you were wondering, yes they do still make vinyl releases in some places (but not many). John Newton has assembled another mixed bag of fascinating collectors' items which I find quite highly entertaining.

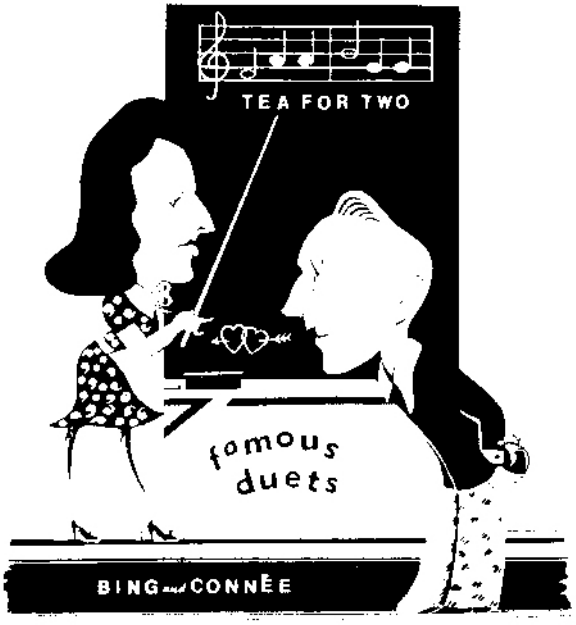
Contents: Bing - Two for tonight (the full version recorded for use behind the credits of the movie) plus the full 1931 radio version of 'I cried for you'. Two great tracks. Other items: Let's give 3 cheers for love (Lanny Ross & Lyda Roberti), Some of these days (unissued 1937 Sophie Tucker recording), I'm on the crest of a wave (Harry Richman, Willie Howard and George White in a 1928 rehearsal recording for a Broadway show), Toot toot Tootsie and 2 takes of California Here I Come (Al Jolson 1939 movie soundtrack), 1940 Christmas greetings from Paramount (Jack Benny & Fred Allen), There's nothing too good for my baby (Eddie Cantor, unissued 1931 take), Sing you sinners (Belle Baker 1930), Hello Sunshine hello (Georgie Price 1929), Happiness ahead (Dick Powell - alternate film take, 1934).

The record may ordered direct from John Newton, PO Box 7171, Wilmington, Delaware 19803, USA.

John is also contemplating a Volume 5 in the series if he gets enough interest. As this would include Bing singing NIGHT AND DAY from a 1933 Chesterfield broadcast and LOVE LOCKED OUT for a 1934 Woodbury show, I think that John deserves our support, don't you?

To make this record happen, please write to John NOW enclosing a self-addressed envelope, stamped if you live in the USA or with a couple of international reply coupons, if you don't.

VITAPHONE
SONG of LOVE


TEA FOR TWO
famous duets
BING and CONNEE

TEA FOR TWO - BING & CONNEE - LIMITED EDITION CLUB (UK) JGB1010
Another excellent issue from John Joyce in the UK, this LP features fourteen beautifully processed Bing & Connee tracks from record and radio.

Contents: Start the day right (record), An apple for the teacher (record), Tea for two (record), You ain't kidding (radio), Everything happens to me (radio), Manhattan (radio), Number ten lullaby lane (radio), Yes indeed (record), Bob White (record), Basin St Blues (record), Between 18th and 19th on Chestnut St (record), Alexander's Ragtime Band (record), That's a plenty (record), Yes Indeed (radio).

THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY - Vol 12 - 1931-32 - JONZO (UK) - JZ 12
In years to come, John McNicholas' work on collecting the early records of Bing in chronological order will be recognized for the excellent achievement that it is. Volume 12 in the series continues the fine work with all the available takes of just 8 songs from 1931 - 32.

Contents: Gems from George White's Scandals, Blue of the night (two takes), I'm Sorry Dear (two takes), Dinah (two takes), Can't We Talk It Over, I Found You (two takes), Snuggled On Your Shoulder, St Louis Blues (two takes).

Although you probably have many of these tracks already, I urge you to support these issues. They are among the most important Crosby records being issued. Order direct from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7LD, England.

OTHER ISSUES

Overseas, there are a great many compilation CDs featuring two or three Crosby discs among other artists. Frankly, there are just too many to list here. There are also a number of cassette releases, but as these feature familiar material, again I haven't bothered listing them.

One CD worthy of mention is A TRIBUTE TO DUKE, originally issued on Concord Jazz in 1977 and featuring one of Bing's last recordings 'Don't Get Around Much Anymore'. This is available in Japan on King 262E 6034.

THE EASIEST WAY TO BUY ANY OVERSEAS ISSUES

Most of the British, European and American issues shown here are not available in Australia. However, you can purchase them quite painlessly through Derek Parkes' Crosby Collectors' Club. Membership cost is nominal and for your money, you receive a list of what's new four times a year.

Derek has a Commonwealth bank account in Australia, so all payments can be made directly into it without the need to bother about bank drafts, etc. Simply write to Derek, place your order and wait for the records to arrive. Derek will advise you of all the costs involved and all you do then is deposit the money at your local branch.

His address: Derek Parkes, 66 Firs Road, Firsdown, Salisbury, Wilts. SP5 1SW, England

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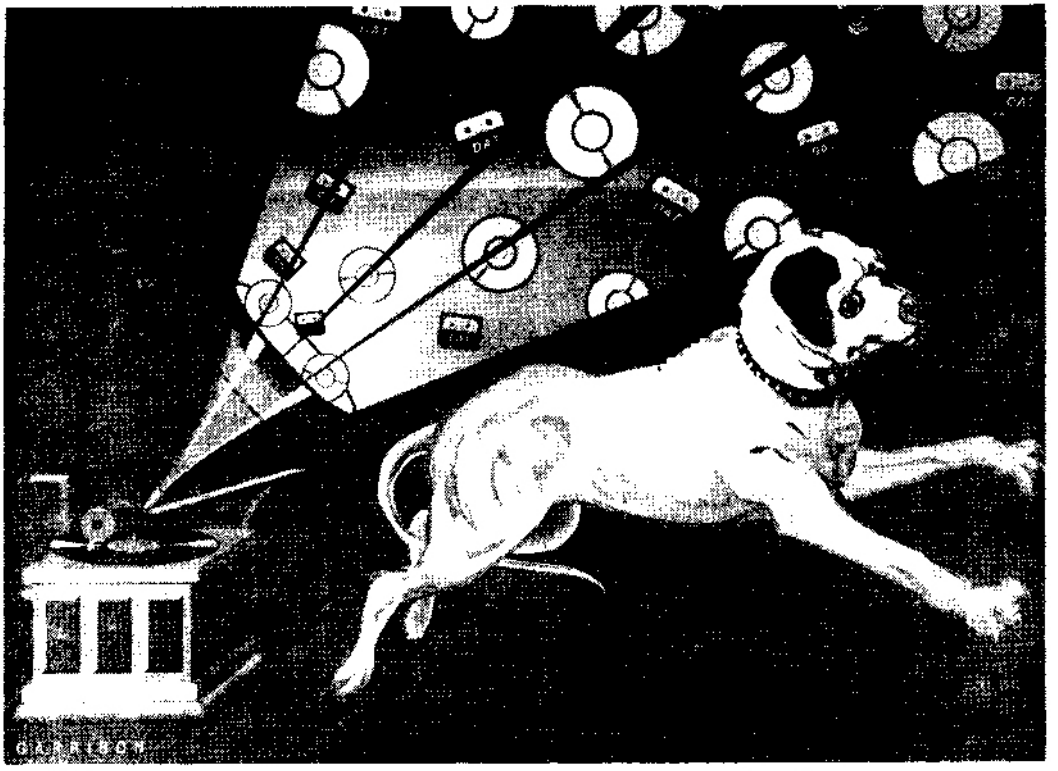
"If you think you've tasted the best tequila, you've got another drink comin'!..."

TEQUILA HERRADURA

100% BLUE AGAVE



There's a revolution going on for your listening pleasure

Your last trip to a record store left you dazed. LPs, EPs, 12-inch singles, 45s, cassettes, cassette singles, CDs, CD-3s, CD videos, even DATs. Did you suddenly wake up in a consumer nightmare?

Maybe your record collection is old enough to qualify as an exhibit at the Smithsonian.

You haven't bought a new album since the Carpenters released their last Christmas LP, and your record rack looks more like a dust bin.

Lately you've been dreaming about adding a compact disc player to your aging stereo system, but the phrase "digital sound" gives you fits, conjuring up visions of technicians in white lab coats inventing new products so complicated they require a five-page instruction manual just to turn them on.

Your last trip to a record store left you dazed and confused. LPs, EPs, 12-inch singles, 45s, cassettes, cassette singles, CDs, CD-3s, CD videos, even DATs Did you fall asleep and suddenly wake up in a consumer nightmare?

HOW DID THINGS get so complicated?

A decade ago the choice was simple for the buyer of recorded music. Most recordings came on the tried-and-true LP – long-play vinyl disc and the 45 r.p.m. single. For those on the go, eight-track tapes (and later cassettes) provided comparable or superior sound in a convenient, versatile package, with the added ability to record.

But the revolution in digital sound that brought us CDs (compact discs) a few years ago and now DATs (digital audio tapes) has left us with a mind-boggling array of choices – and doubts about what will be the dominant audio format of the future

Are LPs becoming relics of the past, soon to disappear from the stores? Are CDs the last word in audio technology? Or will DATs render them obsolete? And what about new developments on the horizon, including recordable CDs?

The audio and recording industries aren't much help to consumers in sorting through the clutter. They're too busy milking profits from compact discs, squabbling over the home-taping controversy that

has stalled the introduction of DAT recorders, and bombarding us with endless product changes and refinements. Consumers are left to fend for themselves in an ever-confusing marketplace.

IS AUDIO TECHNOLOGY moving too fast?

It certainly has taken a quantum leap since Thomas Edison's day.

Edison, who invented the first working phonograph in the 1870s, recorded sounds on a rotating cylinder covered with tin foil. In the heyday of the big bands, the dominant format was the flat 78 r.p.m. disc made of a brittle clay and shellac compound that was prone to break.

A major advancement came in 1948 when Columbia Records introduced the LP, made of flexible plastic. Stereophonic phonographs appeared a decade later, and by the late 1960s, nearly all phonographs and records were stereo.

Conventional analog recordings, from Edison's cylinders to modern LPs, store music in tiny grooves that duplicate sound waves. Despite improvements in fidelity over the years, analog recordings are prone to pick up background noise.

The digital revolution began quietly in the 1970s when an advanced new recording system was developed to convert sound waves into numerical codes. These codes are read by a laser and converted back into sound. The result is impeccable recordings, free of hiss, distortion and background noise.

Introduced a few years ago, the compact disc has enjoyed widespread acceptance because of its convenient size, easy programmability and startling clarity. The format's success has been a boon to the recording industry, which had been in a sales slump before CDs were introduced. The CD was the perfect bauble to entice bored consumers back into record stores.

According to the Recording Industry Association of America, CD sales were 70.4 million for the first half of 1988, up 64 percent from the same period in 1987. On the other hand, LP sales fell 22 percent to 43.5 million (cassettes are still the leading format, accounting for about 65 percent of all recording sales).

But with the rush to introduce new titles to fill record racks, CD quality occasionally has suffered. In CD reissues of older pop and rock albums, some record labels have used inferior master tapes and dropped original songs -- all for a quick profit. Some of these CDs have not sounded much better than a high-quality LP.

Because no needle touches the CD's surface, it has been touted as virtually indestructible. But last summer reports came out claiming that millions of CDs already sold to consumers could distort or fade over time because of oxidation of the disc's aluminum coating. The reports were later disputed by experts, but not before consumer confidence had been shaken. How well CDs stand up over long periods of time under less-than-ideal conditions remains to be seen.

With CD sales climbing and cassettes maintaining their lead over all other formats, the recording industry is leery of digital audio tape. But this isn't fair to consumers. DAT may be the one format that outperforms them all.

Introduced in 1986 in Japan, DAT player-recorders offer the same flawless sound as CD players, with the added ability to produce near-perfect copies of compact discs and other recordings (DAT cassettes are about two-thirds the size of a standard audio cassette).

Because of this, DAT recorders are regarded as a threat to the U.S.-dominated recording industry, which is concerned that home tapers and audio pirates will drain revenue and deprive musicians of royalties by making flawless copies of recordings they should otherwise be paying for. (The recording industry has long had a similar complaint about cassettes, which don't pose as great a threat as DATs because of their less-than-perfect sound reproduction).

Through intense lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C., the recording industry has discouraged foreign manufacturers from selling DAT machines in the U.S. without a device to prevent direct copying from compact discs. So far, no company has come up with a suitable device to do this (CBS' "copy code" anti-taping system failed U.S. government tests in March) and as a result the DAT situation remains at a stalemate.

BUT, FINALLY, there is progress.

In November, representatives of Japanese and European electronics manufacturers meeting in London resolved to look into technical solutions to some of the problems that have put manufacturers of DAT recorders and the recording industry at odds (a similar meeting in Vancouver, B.C., in 1986 resulted in bitter disagreement).

It was a breakthrough because for the first time the manufacturers of DAT equipment accepted the need to find a system for protecting the intellectual properties of writers, musicians, producers and record companies.

Though they are still searching for a technical remedy, a better approach would be to levy a tax on all blank tapes rather than tamper with the machine's remarkable ability to record.

So far, DAT recorders and software have sold poorly in Japan and Europe. The major roadblock is price -- up to $2,000 for a recorder -- though prices will come down in time (in the United States recorders are available only through "gray market" dealers and are often sold without warranties; however, automotive DAT players, which get around the home-taping controversy, can be purchased normally at some car-stereo shops).

Another factor in poor sales is the dearth of prerecorded DAT cassettes. Some labels have begun offering them, but selection is limited.

Though DAT adds to the confusion of so many audio formats, it's an important new system capable of replacing the standard cassette if prices come down. Record industry observers fret that DAT will dermil the boom in CD sales, but DAT is more likely to complement CDs in the same way that cassettes have complemented LPs. By holding up DAT's release, the industry is shortchanging consumers. Those who invest in expensive CD hardware now may discover later that they prefer DATs.

While the DAT question remains unresolved and CDs enjoy increased acceptance, the recording industry is moving rapidly to phase out the LP.

Those who have been buying LPs (and its cousin the EP, or extended-play disc) for years are finding that fewer stores are stocking them and those that are aren't offering many titles. There are plenty of conservative record buyers who have no desire to buy a compact disc player unless LPs simply are no longer available, if then. With an estimated 80 million turntables (as opposed to about 7 million CD players) in American households, record companies would be wrong to turn their backs on LP buyers.

There is good reason the LP has lasted so long. It offers good to excellent sound quality and is low in cost. And LP selections include older, more obscure titles that may never come out on CD.

News that CBS Records has decided to continue producing LPs is encouraging, though its sister company, CBS Sony Group (both are now owned by Sony of Japan), has announced plans to slash its production of LPs this year.

OTHER NEW DEVELOPMENTS could further cloud the future of audio technology.

Record companies recently introduced the CD video, which offers digital sound matched to color imagery (Polygram Records released 100 new CD video titles this year), and recordable CDs are on their way.

Tandy Corp., the parent company of Radio Shack, surprised the recording industry last spring with the announcement that it had developed a system for making recordable CDs. No date has been set for its introduction.

With so many choices, is it any wonder consumers are being cautious about buying new equipment? Investing in an expensive piece of audio gear is like buying a ticket on the Titanic.

Though no one doubts the new technology is here to stay, the audio and recording industries could do more to ease the inevitable transition from analog to digital recordings.

They must work to build consumer confidence by assuring that older formats are not phased out prematurely, that CDs continue to live up to their hype and that the home taping controversy is resolved soon.

Bing Crosby, in Honolulu on a combined business and pleasure jaunt, introduces the latest Hollywood enthusiasm — a motor-driven scooter

BING and WALT wake up Sleepy Hollow with a BANG
Walt Disney
presents
THE ADVENTURES OF
"ICHABOD
AND MISTER TOAD"
told and sung by
BING CROSBY
and told by BASIL RATHBONE
Color by TECHNICOLOR
Distributed by RKO Radio Pictures
Hear BING sing:
"THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN"
"KATRINA"
"ICHABOD CRANE"
TWO TALL TALES
In one hilarious all cartoon feature... two of the finest stories ever written, are told by... three of the world's great storytellers: Walt Disney, Bing Crosby, Basil Rathbone.
Walt and Bing listing to rollicking, melodious life that famous [illegible] Washington Irving's fabulous "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" with awkward Ichabod Crane, [illegible] Katrina and the [illegible] Headless Horseman.
Walt and Basil Rathbone tell another tall tale about that rich, reckless opportunist rake, The Magnificent Mr. Toad, and his [illegible] friends in a spark-big interpretation of Kenneth Grahame's "The Wind in the Willows."

(Supplied by Trevor Wagstaff)

BING

reviewed by E. NILS HOLSTIUS

SOME years ago, had we lived in Spokane, in the state of Washington, Harry Crosby Jr. might have delivered mail to our house; or arrived in a broken-down Ford to deliver our groceries; or acted as janitor and cleaner at our local club. Had we visited a nearby farm, we might have seen him tending cattle and endeavouring to milk them at the accepted hours, for these are some of the things Harry Crosby Jr. did to work his way through college. He was destined to become a lawyer.

But Harry Crosby Jr., known to the world as Bing, was born with an irrepressibly mischievous disposition and a curiously formed larynx. He still has the same larynx, and his happy-go-lucky disposition doesn't seem to have deserted him, either.

I have just finished reading a book sent to me by the co-authors, Larry and Ted Crosby. It is entitled "Bing." I had discussed this book with Larry in Hollywood last year and read some of the earlier chapters, in typescript. It was to be sold, so Larry informed me, at cost price, to Bing's fans. The de luxe edition at $1.50 (plus tax); the ordinary edition at $1.00 (plus postage). Wondering how many of these fans were loyal enough to put their hands into their pockets and bring out six shillings in order to learn more about their favourite star, Larry led me to another part of the office to see the organization which deals with Bing's fan mail. I questioned the success of this project no longer. Bing's fan mail arrives in sacks from every part of the world. So I anticipate that the Fan Mail Department has now taken on further staff.

I learnt much of Bing's history while I was in Hollywood. I was his guest on many occasions. Yet there is a great deal that I did not know until I read this book, and many of the incidents which his brothers have recounted with such modesty - and candour - make excellent reading. We read of the family's early struggles and of Harry senior and Kate Crosby's efforts to bring up four sons and two daughters in the way they should go, with Bing still "Harry" to his mother always seeming to go in the wrong direction. And as an erring son so often is, Bing remained - and still remains—Kate Crosby's favourite child. But he must have been a young terror in the neighbourhood!

These earlier details might have become maudlin had not Bing's own mischievousness—for I can think of no other word - enlivened these pages. And I, knowing him, read them with relish. The Bing Crosby of to-day is the self-same happy-go-lucky adventurer who threw aside a legal career, setting out in a broken-down Ford with another roving spirit, some music, drums, and a song on their lips. That was all they had, save a determination to become something in the world of music.

Kate Crosby took it badly. Larry was then a school teacher; Everett had become a hotel clerk in Portland, Oregon. With her two oldest boys so well placed in life and so much care and thought devoted to Harry Jr.'s education, that he should want to become a drummer and a vocalist in a dance band was more than she could bear.

Everett Crosby

Bing Crosby has altered little since then. As one of the highest paid artists in the world, he would much rather stand talking to an old friend of former days, sucking his pipe, than smoking cigars with the "people who matter." To meet him, there are no airs or affectations. He is always smiling. His clothes cause his more than attractive wife, Dixie Lee, considerable concern. Unless she takes a hand in his sartorial affairs, he will leave his palatial home for the studios looking like the jobbing gardener or the odd man.

And while I read this book, three things struck me very forcibly. In England, a certain section of the population, who delight in writing rude letters to the newspapers, seem to regard crooners as over-dressed young "ninnies" who mince their way towards the microphone at the right moments to mouth incredibly mawkish lyrics over the ether. Old die-hards get very angry about this form of entertainment, and the highbrows become quite nauseated. Whilst, in many cases, I am forced to agree, the King of Crooners is nevertheless a Prince among men. Here, anyhow, is no hot-house plant. Bing hits a golf-ball farther than any man in Hollywood, finishes his round in the early seventies, owns twelve racehorses, a beautiful home in Hollywood and an equally lovely ranch home at Del Mar, is a devoted husband and father - his latest additions to his family being the twins, Philip and Dennis—and is a man you will only entice away from his family circle by suggesting a visit to the boxing matches, football, racing or polo. Otherwise he invites old friends to his home where he can be away from the normal "ballyhoo" of Show Business.

The second thing to impress me about this book is the family "atmosphere" which permeates every page, and which I know to be true. The Crosby family from Spokane is now *Bing Crosby Incorporated* of Hollywood. Everett is its general manager; Larry looks after its publicity; Harry Crosby Senior keeps regular office hours and always looks exceedingly busy when you call. Kate Crosby attends every

pre-view of a Crosby picture, and, as I know since accompanying her to the first showing of " Rhythm on the Range," she demands a high standard, and woe betide the outsider who dares to criticize her favourite son ! Bob Crosby is now a successful band leader in his own right. And Kate Crosby is the idol of all her children.

The third thing to impress me about this book is the trojan work Everett has done for his brother and the part he has played in the creation of this world-famous figure. Had it not been for Everett's good nature I question whether Bing would have been the personality he is to-day ; anyhow, so soon. Elder brother Everett, the hotel clerk in Portland, Oregon, the steady-going son who returned from the war as a sergeant in the artillery, complete with a French accent and a vocabulary sufficient to impress the local " belles," is blessed with a large heart and a ready wit. Unknown to his mother, he had combined his dull routine as a hotel clerk with the more exciting, and considerably more profitable, occupation of local bootlegger. In this way he was able to help his young profligate brother over many stiles. He also saved him from jail when he and his early adventurer in the Ford car became involved over a matter of a Chinaman and his chop-suey—one of the less creditable escapades which brothers Larry and Ted tell with such delightful candour. Yet in a later encounter with the officers of the law the indefatigable Everett was not quite so successful.

Bing, prior to his marriage, was arrested for a motoring offence and, since it could be proved that his evening had not been entirely teetotal, he was thrown into jail without redress. At this unfortunate moment, Bing's first film contract had been secured and he was due to start work next day. Everett had moved by then from the hotel clerking business and had found work as a salesman of trucks in Los Angeles. When news reached Everett that night, Bing was already languishing in a Hollywood jail.

Everett rushed from his home to see the judge, but not even his well-known plausibility could move this stern defender of the peace. Justice, he said, must be done : the sentence served in full. Bing's chances of becoming a film star seemed fading into thin air.

Undaunted, Everett rushed from the judge to find other strings which might be pulled. To his everlasting credit, Bing *did* appear on the set next morning, grinning cheerfully, but in the company of a police officer whose duty it was never to let the culprit out of his sight ; then to deliver his charge back to his cell each night until the sentence was served. Such things could happen only in America, and this story has always made me laugh. I'm glad it has been included in the book.

Everett decided to leave truck-selling after this and concentrate on handling his brother, proceeding almost immediately to New York to sell Bing as a radio artist. How successful he was it is not necessary for me to explain.

Like all the Crosbys, I have never seen Everett without a smile. When you meet him he tells you at once that he is the " Wrong Crosby," and his laughter echoes through Hollywood. The tallest of the brothers, he differs in one other respect from the " Right Crosby " save that he can't sing in tune ! , for he is always immaculate. Bing, on the other hand, I saw wear a tie only on two occasions : having supper one night at a smart Hollywood " nitery," and leaving for a well-earned holiday in Honolulu. But the one thing all Crosbys have in common is that they're all " regular guys " who have made good, and never forget an old friend.

I hope Bing's fans in England can obtain copies of this book, which is plentifully sprinkled with illustrations. As one would imagine, Larry and Ted have dedicated the book to " Mother and Bing." And Bing, in a short preface, ends by saying : " This thing is hardly offered as a guide to aspirants for success in show business, but only indicates what a lucky guy I am—so far."

Which is just what I would have expected Bing to have said.

BINGthings society

4084 CHERRYTREE PLACE. LAKE HAVASU CITY, AZ 86403 (602) 855-5888
4333 SOUTH 41st #28, TACOMA, WA 98409 (206) 472-6030

October 26, 1989

Dear Bob:

Possibly you remember me. I wrote you some years ago. I have belonged to your Victorian Bing Crosby Society for nine or so years, first through Richard Pearson and now Mark Scrimger. I think your "Voice" is just wonderful.

About a year ago I left another group which I tried to help (and was unsuccessful) and formed our organization. If memory serves me correctly, you were sent a letter to that effect. We are happy to report everything has been moving along great. We have a goodly number of members that are truly fantastic -- some of America's and Canada's greatest Bing collectors and admirers. Such support is nearly unbelievable.

Recently we held a dinner in New York state. It was the first time an organized Bing event has ever been held on the east coast. Everyone left hoping to have another next year. We plan on doing so.

Our main goal to honor Bing is by erecting a life-sized bronze statue to his memory in the city of his birth: Tacoma. One of the reason for a statue is it requires practically no upkeep, hence no ongoing costs. We are <u>not</u> soliciting funds. When the Internal Revenue Service gives us a tax-deductible status we plan on seeking pledges. No money will be invited nor received until pledges assure us of completion.

We have attempted to create interest in Bing by doing some things others have not tried. For instance, we offer sweatshirts, T-shirts, ciffee mugs and similar things. All have a picture of Bing on them. We did not know if this would be of interest to members, but it certainly has been. Any profit derived goes into the treasury of the BINGthings Society to help defray costs. A financial report was give at the New York dinner. One will be in the next newsletter, BINGTALKS. The last issue is being sent for your perusal.

This letter is to let you know what we are doing, and hopefully what we are attempting to accomplish. I hope this rather lengthly letter is not too boring. We should have written some time ago, but Bob, we have been just swamped -- you know the feeling.

My best to you and all the Bing people in your great country.

Sincerely, Bob

Bob Lundberg

America's Master Songwriter

Irving Berlin: 1888-1989

BY MICHAEL WALSH

Irving Berlin knew what made his music so timelessly popular. "A good song," he once said, "embodies the feelings of the mob, and a songwriter is not much more than a mirror which reflects those feelings. I write a song to please the public — and if the public doesn't like it in New Haven, I change it!"

The public liked it. When Berlin died last week at 101, he was the nation's most beloved songwriter, a Russian Jewish immigrant born Israel Baline, who rose from Cherry Street on Manhattan's Lower East Side to pride of place on Tin Pan Alley. Berlin's song is ended. But each time someone gazes up at blue skies, of wonders how deep is the ocean, or says it with music, his melodies linger on.

In comparison with his great contemporaries, Berlin wrote simple songs. Not for him the intricate rhythms and trick accents of a George Gershwin, although the strangely sinister *Puttin' on the Ritz* twists and turns back on itself like a stutter-stepping snake. Nor did Berlin, who wrote his own words, generally show Cole Porter's kind of cleverness, although he could put some English on a homely sentiment in a song like *Lazy* (1924): "I wanna peep through the deep/ Tangled wildwood./ Counting sheep/ 'Til I sleep/ Like a child would./ With a great big valise full of books to read where it's peaceful/ While I'm killing time being lazy."

Berlin's musical signature was the sheer inevitability of his songs, the way they seemed to have always been around, like folk songs. Surely *White Christmas* is an authentic carol, not a number composed for the 1942 movie *Holiday Inn*. *God Bless America* must have been sung first by Washington's troops at Valley Forge, not by Kate Smith in 1938. And didn't *Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning* emerge from a pioneer encampment and not from a 1918 army musical called *Yip, Yip, Yaphank*?

Well, no. All three were products of a deceptively sophisticated professional who grew up with the country, reflecting America's experiences in his music. When the Baline family fled the Russian pogroms in 1892 for the tenements of New York, young Israel was four. The Statue of Liberty was only a couple of years older. His father Moses, a cantor, died when the boy was eight, so he hit the streets in search of work. Izzy sang for pennies anywhere he could find listeners, finally landing a job as a singing waiter in a raffish Chinatown bistro; it was there that he wrote his first song, *Marie from Sunny Italy*, in partnership with the cafe's pianist. When the song was published in 1907, a printer's error had given him a new name: I. Berlin.

"Once you start singing," Berlin said in later years, "you start thinking of writing your own songs. It's as simple as that." Although he could not read or write music (he never did learn), he could pick out a melody on the piano in the key of F♯. In 1909 Berlin, now calling himself Irving because it sounded tonier, landed a $25-a-week job with a Tin Pan Alley publisher. Two years later, he picked his way into American musical history with *Alexander's Ragtime Band*. More a march than a rag, it made Berlin famous, erroneously, as the "ragtime king", what it really made him was king of the pop song.

The hit parade had begun. When his wife Dorothy Goetz died in 1912, Berlin poured out his grief in his first real ballad, *When I Lost You*. *The Ziegfeld Follies of 1919* brought forth *A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody*; 1924 saw both the tenderly brooding *What'll I Do?* and the valse triste *All Alone*. His courtship of heiress Ellin Mackay, granddaughter of an owner of the Comstock Lode, was breathlessly followed in the press, and their secret marriage in 1926, over her father's vigorous objections, made headlines. It also made standards like *Always*.

For a short time, Berlin felt himself mined out. But an invitation from Moss Hart to collaborate on *Face the Music* in 1932 opened a rich new vein of melody. Depression America fought off the gathering gloom with the cheery bounce of *Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee*. For the first-act finale of *As Thousands Cheer* (1933), he dusted off an old clinker called *Smile and Show Your Dimple*, put a new bonnet on it and called it *Easter Parade*. Two years later, it was on to Hollywood, where Berlin wrote many of the tunes that sent Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers flying into celluloid legend. Back on Broadway in 1946, he achieved his greatest success with *Annie Get Your Gun*, which gave showfolk their brassy anthem, *There's No Business Like Show Business*.

A sparrow of a man who always had trouble sleeping and could never sit still, Berlin worked at a furious pace. During a production conference for *Annie Get Your Gun*, it was decided that the show needed another song, so the composer rushed home. Six minutes later, the show's director got a phone call. "Listen to this," said Berlin, who launched into the first verse of *Anything You Can Do*. He had written it in the taxi.

"It must be hell being Irving Berlin," a music publisher once lamented. "The poor guy's his own toughest competition." Few could match his output: more than 800 published songs and almost as many unpublished. Nor could they equal his business acumen. Fiercely protective of the copyrights to his songs, he helped establish the principle that every performance of a composer's work deserved a royalty. At the end, the boy from Cherry Street was worth millions.

His last show was *Mr. President* (1962), a failure. But he continued to pick out tunes just the same. "The question is," he would ask rhetorically, "are you going to be a crabby old man or are you going to write another song?" He watched his parade of birthdays go by quietly, embarrassed by the fuss made by the world at large. Though fans gathered outside his Manhattan town house for a 100th birthday serenade, he was unimpressed with his longevity. "Age," he observed, "is no mark of merit unless you do something constructive with it." What he did was indisputable. ■

Songwriter to the nation: Irving Berlin in his heyday

His melodies seem as inevitable as folk songs.

The song in America's heart

New York

Songwriter Irving Berlin, who has died aged 101, celebrated his adopted homeland with memorable melodies and simple but heartfelt lyrics in such standards as *God Bless America*.

An actor, singer and songwriter, Berlin began his career in the early days of vaudeville. His songs once so dominated the stage and screen that the late composer, Jerome Kern, said: "Berlin has no place in American music — he *is* American music."

Berlin, whose musical career began as a singing waiter, wrote nearly 1000 songs, from his first big hit in 1911, *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, to *Puttin' on the Ritz*, revived in 1983 by the Dutch singer, Taco, and a hit on the rock charts.

Berlin was a Russian-Jewish immigrant whose *God Bless America* became the unofficial second national anthem. His songs *White Christmas* and *Easter Parade* have always been seasonal signature tunes.

He played the piano by ear, and never stopped making what he described as "songs with heart". Even in his 90s, he talked of writing another musical — after a career that included 19 stage musicals and 15 movie scores.

At his peak, one smash followed another so readily that Cole Porter once said Berlin "can't help but write hits".

A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody, one of many Berlin wrote for the Ziegfeld Follies, became the unofficial theme song for every Ziegfeld extravaganza.

The biggest names on Broadway played in his musical successes, beginning in the World War I era with *Watch Your Step*, starring Irene and Vernon Castle, and running through such post-World War 2 hits as *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Call Me Madam*, both with Ethel Merman. His last Broadway show was *Mr President* in 1962.

In Hollywood, Berlin did the scores of *Top Hat*, starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, *Holiday Inn*, with Astaire and Bing Crosby, *Blue Skies*, *Easter Parade*, *White Christmas* and *There's No Business Like Show Business*.

Irving Berlin in his songwriting heyday, and (below) more recently.

His music-publishing empire earned him a fortune, which he shared with his country in wartime or with favourite causes.

Explaining the seemingly endless gusher of successful songs, Berlin said modestly that his tunes were merely rewrites of seven or eight of his best.

"All good songwriters have no more than half a dozen good tunes in their systems, and if they have that many, they're liberally blessed," he once said.

Celebrity and great wealth did not seem to touch the shy personality of the intense, short man with slicked-down wavy hair and dark glasses. He lived a simple life, centred around his songwriting and his family — his late wife, Ellin, and their three daughters.

Berlin grew up in poverty amid the immigrant swarm on New York City's Lower East Side of Manhattan. Born Israel Baline on May 11, 1888, he was five when his family emigrated from Temun in eastern Russia.

One of eight children, he acquired his earliest musical education from his father, a cantor. His father's death ended Berlin's formal education and, aged eight, he left school for the streets to earn a living.

Known as Izzy, Berlin sold newspapers, guided a blind, singing beggar and worked in vaudeville. In 1907, he wrote the words to his first song, *Marie from Sunny Italy*, with the piano player at the Chinatown bar where he was a singing waiter.

The song earned him 37 cents in royalties and a new name — the sheet music cover erroneously credited the words to I. Berlin.

He went to work for the music publisher, Ted Snyder, who soon made him a partner. In 1911, aged 23, he contributed songs to the Ziegfeld Follies.

His *Alexander's Ragtime Band* ushered jazz on to the popular scene.

Berlin's marriage to Dorothy Goetz the next year ended after six months when his bride died of typhoid contracted during their honeymoon in Havana. In his grief, Berlin composed *When I Lost You*.

His marriage in 1926 to Ellin Mackay followed one of the most widely reported courtships of the decade.

The 1930s brought Broadway scores for *Face the Music* and *As Thousands Cheer*.

Berlin's first film score was the 1935 *Top Hat*, in which Astaire and Rogers sang and danced their way through *Cheek To Cheek*.

The decade ended with Kate Smith introducing *God Bless America*, and Berlin donating all profits from the song to American boy and girl scouts.

In the 1940s, Berlin was in top form, penning *Putting on the Ritz*, *There's No Business Like Show Business* and *White Christmas*, sung by Bing Crosby in *Holiday Inn*. His greatest stage success came in 1946 with *Annie Get Your Gun*.

Berlin tried to retire from show business in 1954. After buying back all his copyrights, he tried unsuccessfully to play golf and fish.

Berlin, with 11 other US immigrants, received a medal from then-President Ronald Reagan during the Statue of Liberty centennial celebrations in July 1986.

Reuter

G

G. EXCLUSIVE! *White Christmas* Keepsake Stocking to hang by your chimney with care. Your own Christmas "elf" will be delighted to fill it with all your Christmas wishes. 22" long in a green acrylic knit with red-and-white embroidered "White Christmas" on front. Imported.
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L

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The biggest box-office hit of 1954 continues to delight audiences today as much as ever. *White Christmas* weaves a special holiday magic with the sparkling song-and-dance talents of Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye. Aided by Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen, and an unforgettable score by Irving Berlin, *White Christmas* is a thoroughly entertaining holiday musical you'll want to share with everyone you love.

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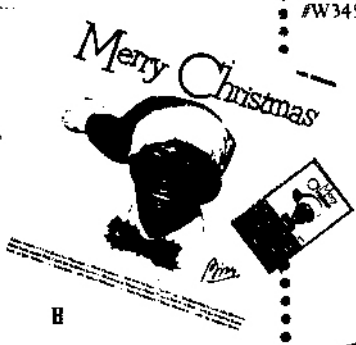

H

J

J. EXCLUSIVE! *White Christmas* Puff-Paint Sweatshirt. Brighten up your holidays in this cheery red or green sweatshirt with unique puff-paint *White Christmas* logo on front. Cotton/polyester fleece to keep you warm and snuggly. Made in USA. Men's sizes fit women, too. S(34–36), M(38–40), L(42–44), XL(46–48). Machine washable.
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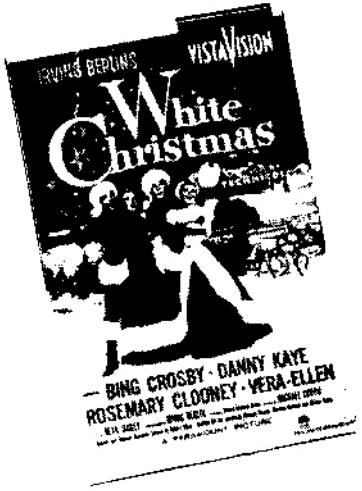
#W3450 T-Shirt...$16

...DREAMING OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS



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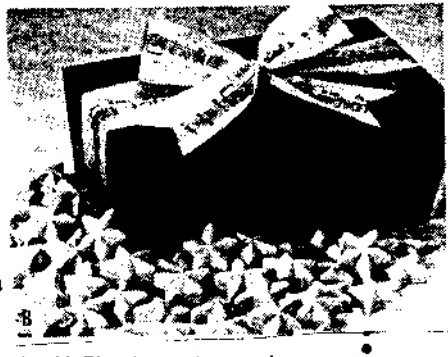

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F

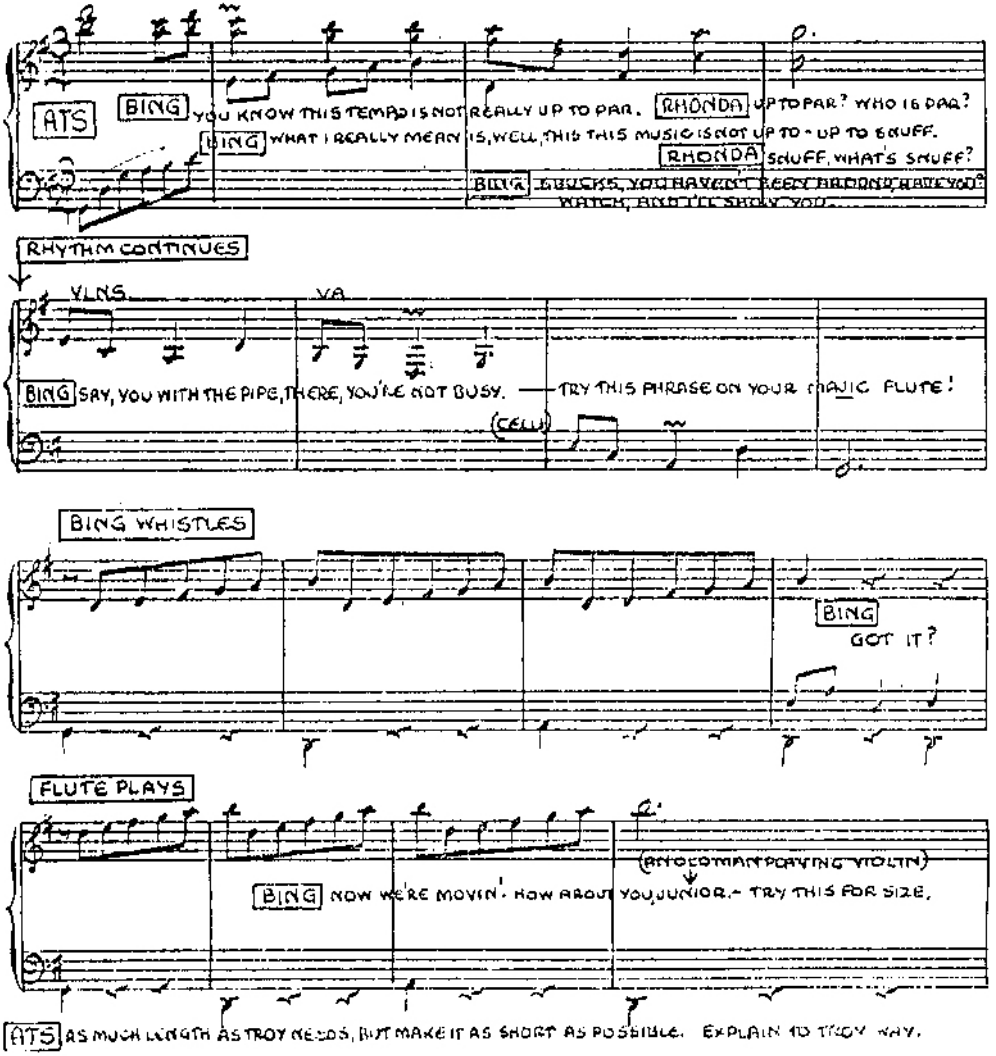
REC. VERS. (VOCAL)

11433

MINUET TO JAZZ

("CONNECTICUT YANKEE")

ARR. JOSEPH J. LILLEY



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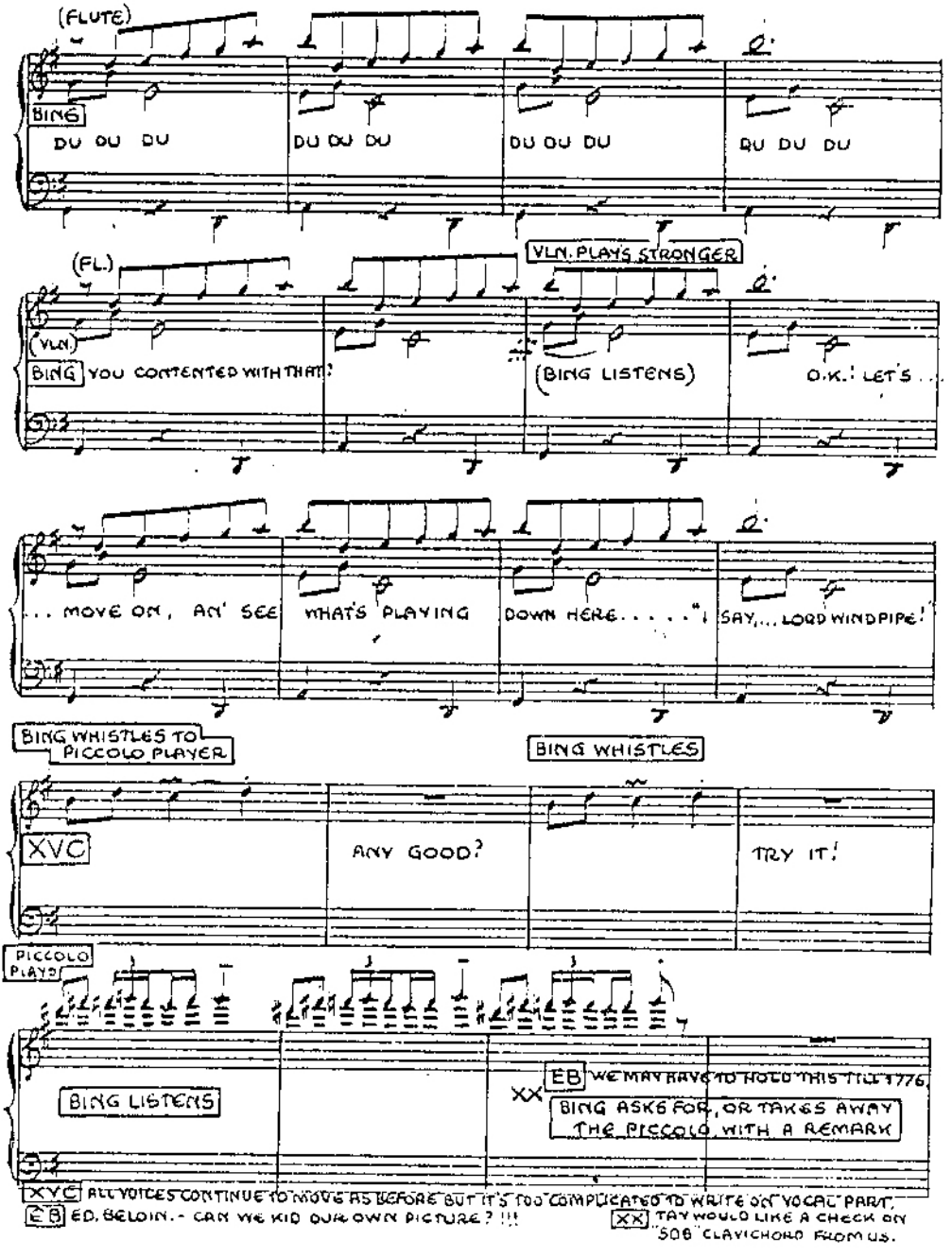
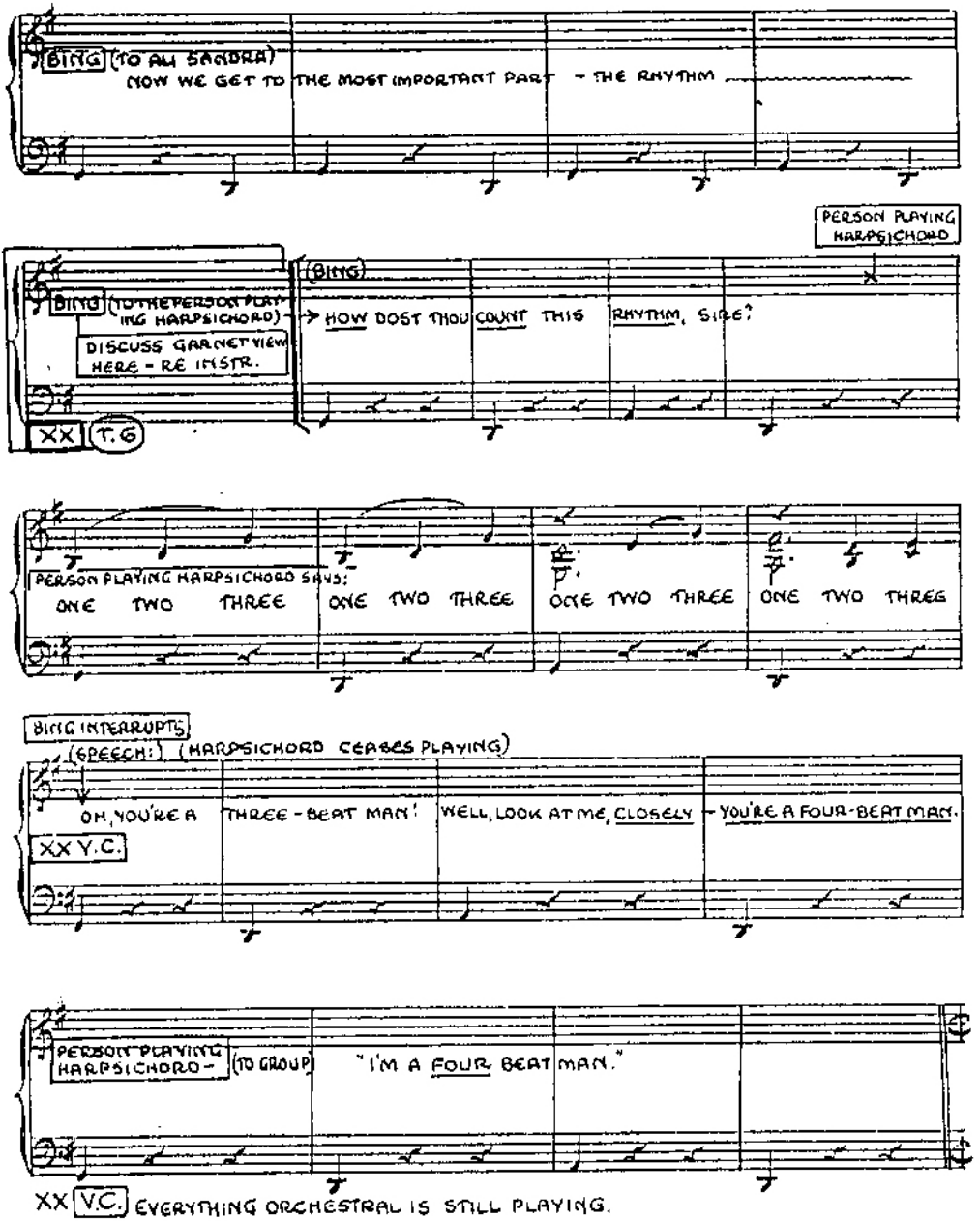
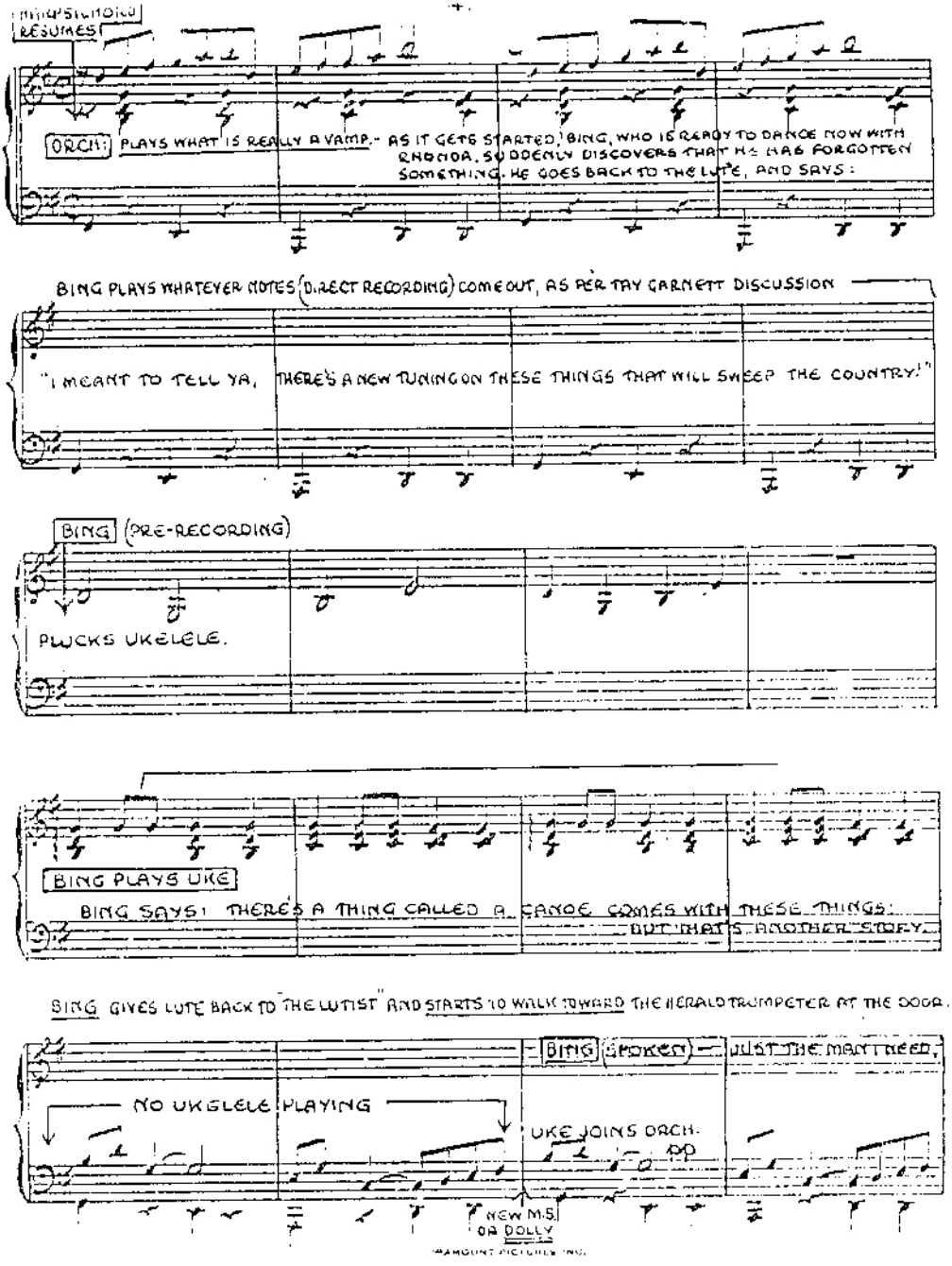

(FLUTE)
BING
DU DU DU
DU DU DU
DU DU DU
DU DU DU
(FL.)
VLN. PLAYS STRONGER
(VLN.)
BING YOU CONTENTED WITH THAT?
(BING LISTENS)
O.K.! LET'S . . .
. . . MOVE ON, AN' SEE
WHAT'S PLAYING
DOWN HERE . . . . . "!
SAY, . . . LORD WINDPIPE!
BING WHISTLES TO PICCOLO PLAYER
BING WHISTLES
XVC
ANY GOOD?
TRY IT!
PICCOLO PLAYS
BING LISTENS
XX
EB WE MAY HAVE TO HOLD THIS TILL 1776.
BING ASKS FOR, OR TAKES AWAY THE PICCOLO WITH A REMARK
XVC ALL VOICES CONTINUE TO MOVE AS BEFORE BUT IT'S TOO COMPLICATED TO WRITE ON VOCAL PART.
EB ED. BELOIN. - CAN WE KID OUR OWN PICTURE? !!!
XX TAY WOULD LIKE A CHECK ON "508" CLAVICHORD FROM US.

3.


BING (TO ALL SANDRA)
NOW WE GET TO THE MOST IMPORTANT PART - THE RHYTHM
PERSON PLAYING HARPSICHORD
BING (TO THE PERSON PLAYING HARPSICHORD)
DISCUSS GARNET VIEW HERE - RE INSTR.
XX T.G
(BING)
HOW DOST THOU COUNT THIS RHYTHM, SIRE?
PERSON PLAYING HARPSICHORD SAYS:
ONE TWO THREE ONE TWO THREE ONE TWO THREE ONE TWO THREE
BING INTERRUPTS
(SPEECH:) (HARPSICHORD CEASES PLAYING)
OH, YOU'RE A THREE-BEAT MAN! WELL, LOOK AT ME, CLOSELY - YOU'RE A FOUR-BEAT MAN.
XX Y.C.
PERSON PLAYING HARPSICHORD - (TO GROUP) "I'M A FOUR BEAT MAN."
XX V.C. EVERYTHING ORCHESTRAL IS STILL PLAYING.


MINSTRELS RESUMES
ORCH: PLAYS WHAT IS REALLY A VAMP.- AS IT GETS STARTED, BING, WHO IS READY TO DANCE NOW WITH RHONDA, SUDDENLY DISCOVERS THAT HE HAS FORGOTTEN SOMETHING. HE GOES BACK TO THE LUTE, AND SAYS:
BING PLAYS WHATEVER NOTES (DIRECT RECORDING) COME OUT, AS PER TAY GARNETT DISCUSSION
"I MEANT TO TELL YA, THERE'S A NEW TUNING ON THESE THINGS THAT WILL SWEEP THE COUNTRY!"
BING (PRE-RECORDING)
PLUCKS UKELELE.
BING PLAYS UKE
BING SAYS: THERE'S A THING CALLED A CANOE COMES WITH THESE THINGS: BUT THAT'S ANOTHER STORY.
BING GIVES LUTE BACK TO THE LUTIST AND STARTS TO WALK TOWARD THE HERALD TRUMPETER AT THE DOOR.
NO UKGLELE PLAYING
BING (SPOKEN) JUST THE MAN I NEED.
UKE JOINS ORCH.
pp
NEW M.S. OR DOLLY
PARAMOUNT PICTURES INC.

5. (ALTERNATIVE)

BING

SAY THERE, DO YOU KNOW, . . . DOST THOU KNOW THIST MELODY?

HERALDER "INDEED, SIR BOSS, VERILY I DO"
" " " " " "

THE HERALDER IS BEING SEATED AT THE FRONT, THE MOST PROMINENT PLACE IN THE ORCH! HE NATURALLY HAS A FLAG ATTACHED TO HIS HERALDING TRUMPET, AND THE FLAG IS (OVER HANGING) >>> TS

BING (SPOKEN)

"SIT THEE DOWN, HAVE A CHAIR, MAKE THYSELF COMFORTABLE ——— ALL WE HAVE TO DO NOW IS JUST PLAY A LITTLE BRIGHTER. REMEMBER, WHEN THOU PUTTETH THE BRASS IN, THOU TAKETH THE LEAD OUT."

BING (TURNING BACK TO ALISANDRA (RHONDA) SAYS)

"I THINK EVERYTHING'S ABOUT READY NOW, —
—THE MUSIC — THE WINE — AND THOU — THEE!
OK BOYS, LET'S HAVE AT IT!! — ONE! TWO!

PICTORIAL SEGUE TO DANCE SECTION - "ONCE AND FOR ALWAYS"

VERN TAYLOR WRITES: Found this the other day while in Hollywood. This is from 'Connecticut Yankee' and is the bit of business in the film just before Bing and Rhonda Fleming do their 'Once and For Always' dance sequence when Bing decides to put a bit of life into the dance sequence. You will discover that this is somewhat different from the finished scene. The written directions are by the composer (lyricist-arrange Joe Lilley).

T.S. IF THE FLAG OR TRUMPET (TRB. TO US) OVERHANGS, YOU WILL BE MUSICALLY LOCKED IN FOR A WHILE PICTORIALLY GET HIM SEATED FIRST

Palace
TheatreCentreWestcliff

26th October, 1989

Our ref:- MO/PC

Mr Keith Parkinson
The Victor Crosby Society
Meadowcroft
Houghtons Lane
Eccleston
St. Helens
LANCS
WA10 5LD

Dear Keith Parkinson,

I have been given your name and address as a possible contact for the Bing Crosby Appreciation Society.

We are performing a new play in the spring based on the early life of Bing Crosby and his work with the Rhythm Boys, Al Rinker and Harry Barris. We would like to contact the members of the Appreciation Society who I am sure will be keen to see this excellent new musical play.

I would be very grateful if you could let me have any relevant information that you may have.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Marion Orchard

MARION ORCHARD
MARKETING MANAGER

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Unequalled Style
STARRING
FRED ASTAIRE & BING CROSBY

The Grace of a Bygone Era Resurrected on Compact Disc

BY DIDIER C. DEUTSCH

In the history of Tin Pan Alley, the legendary hub of musical creativity that gave this country some of its most memorable popular songs, the names of two artists come up time and time again – Fred Astaire and Bing Crosby.

In the '30s and '40s, songwriters liked Rodgers and Hart, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Cole Porter and the Gershwins happily churned out vast quantities of tunes that quickly became standards. Fred Astaire and Bing Crosby more than anyone else, contributed to making those tunes more popular, more memorable and more lasting through the rapidly developing media of radio and film.

In their careers, Astaire and Crosby shared many likenesses. They both demonstrated a charm and ease that made them endearing to their contemporaries, even though they never professed to be in the same league as the more visible screen seducers of the era like Clark Gable, Errol Flynn or Tyrone Power; both enjoyed long-lasting professional relationships with partners with whom they became closely identified, Astaire with Ginger Rogers, Crosby with Bob Hope, and, more than anything else, both were responsible for creating an unusual amount of hit songs that were composed specifically for them by the most celebrated tunesmiths of the time.

Fred Astaire, a dancer who sang, is best remembered for his casual nonchalance and ease of movement, along with the "top hat, white tie and tails" that became his trademark in some of the best screen musicals of the 1930s. A stickler for precision, he insisted that "the only way I know how to get a good show is to practice, sweat, rehearse and worry." The perfection we so admire today in his dancing was the result of a grueling regimen that left partners exhausted, but which he insisted was necessary to achieve the seeming effortlessness of movement for which he became justifiably famous.

Astaire was hardly one of those overnight sensations who suddenly finds a star pinned to the door of his dressing room in the romantic tradition of the theater. By the time he made

his Broadway debut in 1917, he had already spent many years working his way through the hard school of vaudeville in which he started as a child.

Born Fred Austerlitz on May 10, 1899, in Omaha, Nebraska, the second child of a stagestruck Austrian immigrant, young Fred was only five years old when he was first dragged to dancing school by his sister Adele, age six and a half. Five years and many hours of practice later, the siblings made their first public appearance together in a Paterson, N.J. vaudeville house. In 1911, they were the star attraction at Proctor's Fifth Ave. Theater, the scene of their New York debut.

Following several years of touring in the U.S. and Canada, the Astaires returned to New York in 1917 to appear in a Broadway revue, "Over the Top." From that moment on, they were seen regularly on Broadway in vehicles like "The Passing Show of 1918" (in which a critic singled out Fred as "an agile youth, and apparently boneless"), "Apple Blossoms," "For Goodness' Sake," which had several songs by the young creative team of George and Ira Gershwin, and "The Bunch and Judy."

In 1923, Fred and Adele Astaire went to London for a repeat performance of "For Goodness' Sake," which had been retitled "Stop Flirting." When they returned to New York, it was to star in the Gershwins' "Lady, Be Good!," which was followed by a succession of hit musical shows, among them "Funny Face" and "The Band Wagon." Then Adele announced that she would retire from show business to marry a British aristocrat, Lord Cavendish.

So securely established was the team of Fred and Adele Astaire that there was some doubt about the future of Fred's career without his sister. Those doubts proved unfounded.

Hollywood had summoned the song-and-dance man, and when he arrived in the film capital in 1933, it was to appear as himself in "Dancing Lady," in which his partner was Joan Crawford. This was followed the same year by "Flying Down to Rio," in which he was teamed with another attractive newcomer, Ginger Rogers. Even though they had secondary roles, their performance of Vincent Youmans' "The Carioca" ignited the screen to such extent that film musicals were never quite the same after that.

Together, Astaire and Rogers appeared in 11 films, among them "The Gay Divorcee," in 1934; "Roberta" and "Top Hat," in 1935; "Follow the Fleet," in 1936; "Swing Time" and "Shall We Dance," in 1937; "Carefree," in 1938; and "The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle," in 1939. The music they danced to was written by the cream of the popular music world composers, including Irving Berlin, the Gershwins, Jerome Kern and Cole Porter.

The only film Astaire made without Rogers during that period was "Damsel in Distress," in 1937, in which his partner was Joan Fontaine. He and Ginger Rogers were reunited in 1948 for the film, "The Barkleys of Broadway."

"For all the lushness of his films, often in settings of splendor and champagne, Mr. Astaire projected a down-to-earth personality, that of a good-hearted fellow whose effortless steps, even at their most dazzling, matched his casual demeanor," wrote Richard F. Shepard in *The New York Times* in an assessment of the dancer's career. "His dance numbers fit neatly within the bounds of a movie screen, but they gave the illusion of being boundless, without regard for the laws of gravity or the limitations of a set."

Following the breakup of his partnership with Ms. Rogers, Astaire embarked on a solo career in which his costars were some of the screen's most eligible partners — Eleanor Powell in "Broadway Melody of 1940," Paulette Goddard in "Second Chorus," and Rita Hayworth in "You'll Never Get Rich," among them.

In 1942, he appeared in one of the biggest musical hits that year, "Holiday Inn," in which his costar was Bing Crosby. The film is best remembered not so much for the fact that it marked the first time both were seen together (they were reunited four years later in "Blue Skies"), but for Crosby's introduction of one of his all-time hits, Irving Berlin's "White Christmas."

Shortly after making the blockbuster "Blue Skies," Astaire announced his retirement, saying that he preferred to end his career on a high note. A couple of years later, however, he was persuaded to come back, and thus started another phase of his illustrious career, even more successful than the previous one, during which he starred in some of the best screen musicals of the '50s and '60s — "Easter Parade," "The Band Wagon," "Silk Stockings," "Daddy Long Legs," "Funny Face," "Finian's Rainbow," in which his costars included Judy Garland, Ann Miller, Cyd Charisse, Leslie Caron, Audrey Hepburn and Petula Clark.

In his later years, he also turned to more dramatic roles but donned his dancing shoes again to appear with Gene Kelly in the anthology, "That's Entertainment, Part 2." He died on June 22, 1987.

Even though he is mostly thought of as a dancer, in the stage shows and in the films in which he starred, Fred Astaire introduced an incredible number of popular tunes, many of which are indelibly associated with him — "They All Laughed," "They Can't Take That Away From Me," "Night and Day," "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails," "Cheek to Cheek," "A Fine Romance," among them.

This last point is magnificently underscored in a superb new collection, starring Fred Astaire, the latest in the "Columbia Years" series of reissue packages but also includes sets by Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Miles Davis and Sarah Vaughan. According to Joel Whitburn's authoritative book "Top Memories 1890-1954," more than two-thirds of the 36 songs contained in this collection, which surveys the years 1935-40, charted, including seven which hit #1 and 30 more that lodged in the top 10.

"He was not just a great dancer," Irving Berlin once remarked, "he was a great singer of songs. He was as good as any of them — as Jolson or Crosby or Sinatra. He was just as good a singer as he was a dancer — not necessarily because of his voice but by his conception of projecting a song."

If Fred Astaire was a dancer who sang, Bing Crosby was a singer who acted, although he always claimed that his acting amounted to little else than being his own self. Indeed, in his early films, his screen image always seemed like an exact replica of his off-screen persona: almost invariably, he was cast as an easygoing crooner, in love with a young damsel, who spent the greater portion of his time trying to melt down her resistance to his amorous advances by singing to her some of the best love songs of the era, many of which were composed specifically for him.

At first, nothing seemed to predispose the young man to becoming a heartthrob. He was born Harry Lillis Crosby, Jr., on May 2, 1904, in Tacoma,

Washington. Soon after his birth, the family moved to Spokane where Crosby grew up, attended school and early on acquired the nickname, "Bing."

While in school, he worked as a ranch hand, a lumberjack, a janitor and a newspaper carrier to earn extra money, until he discovered that he enjoyed singing before a live audience.

Early on, he teamed up with a schoolboy friend of his, Al Rinker, who played piano. The duo began to make a name for itself, so much so that Paul Whiteman, the King of Jazz, heard of them and hired them to play with his band. A third member, Harry Barris, a bass player, was eventually added, thus giving birth to the Rhythm Boys. Whiteman began to feature them regularly in the band, and even gave them a spotlight in his first major film, appropriately titled "The King of Jazz."

Soon, however, the Rhythm Boys became known not only for their vocal abilities but also for their uncontrolled ad-libbing and fooling around during supposedly serious performances. The boys antics, coupled with their habit of disappearing for days without leaving word of their whereabouts, became a constant strain on their relationship with Whiteman. He was only too happy to see them leave to join Gus Arnheim, another stellar band of the period.

Eventually, the act broke up in 1931. While his former partners decided to leave show business altogether, Crosby pushed forward as a solo act, and consolidated his reputation on radio as well as in person, notably during a long and successful engagement at the Paramount Theatre in New York.

Thrust in the public eye, it was only a matter of time before Hollywood took an interest in him, and the following year Crosby was starring in his first major screen vehicle, "The Big Broadcast." In retrospect, the first phase of his film career, which lasted through 1938, doesn't hold too well by contemporary standards. Invariably, Bing was cast as a boyish crooner who didn't seem to take much of anything seriously, and who always managed to break down a young lady's defenses with a smile and a song. It was, however, an image that brought him a loyal following, even though dramatically speaking these films are quite simplistic in tone.

In 1939, Crosby signed with Paramount, and for the next 10 years enjoyed a sensational film career which included such memorable films as "Rhythm on the River," "Birth of the Blues," "Holiday Inn," "Going My Way," "The Bells of St. Mary's," "Blue Skies," "The Emperor Waltz" and "A Connecticut Yankee," in which he demonstrated an increasing ability to portray characters with deeper insights than ever before, in plots that made more dramatic sense than his earlier efforts.

This phase of his career was also marked by the famous "Road" pictures, in which he found himself teamed with Bob Hope. The first in the series, "Road to Singapore," a modestly produced, amusing little ditty, was so successful that it spawned no less than five sequels between 1940 and 1952, each wilder than the previous one, with basically the same plotline that found Crosby and Hope as a pair of down-on-their-luck song-and-dance men, lost on some subcontinent and involved in cliff-hanging adventures to save their love interest, Dorothy Lamour. The "Road" pictures are prime examples of Hollywood at its most delirious, with Crosby and Hope allowed to "wing it" as they went along, playing it by ear rather than by the script, and getting along famously in the process, sometimes at the expense of Paramount.

In these and the other films he did for the studio, Crosby was cast as an easygoing free spirit who despises work, an image with which wartime audiences, tired of the problems of everyday life, could readily identify. In his book, "The Films of Bing Crosby," author Robert Bookbinder writes, "Nothing could relax a battle-fatigued wartime audience more than stretching out in a movie theatre for 90 carefree minutes to watch the easy-going Bing casually thumb his nose at society's ludicrous stuffiness and warble a collection of Burke-Van Heusen tunes that usually fit in beautifully with the Crosby charisma."

The list of tunes Crosby introduced in his films, and subsequently turned into hits on records and radio, is almost as phenomenal as the ones created by Fred Astaire in his own films. Among the most celebrated are "June in January" (from "Here Is My Heart"), "Soon" (from "Mississippi"), "Pennies From Heaven," "Too Marvelous for Words" (from "Ready, Willing and Able"), "The Moon Got in My Eyes" (from "Double or Nothing"), "Remember Me" (from "Mr. Dodd Takes the Air"), "I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams" (from "Sing, You Sinners"), "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby" (from "Hard to Get"), "Only Forever" (from "Rhythm on the River") and "Moonlight Becomes You" (from "Road to Morocco").

All the while, of course, Crosby also recorded a significant number of songs that furthered his popularity and made him the most celebrated singer of his era. His single, most impressive achievement during that time, however, was "White Christmas." This song became one of the most popular tunes in the history of Tin Pan Alley and subsequently became the title tune of one of Crosby's last efforts for Paramount.

By then, the Crosby screen image had acquired a new veneer, thanks primarily to the dramatic roles he played in films like "The Country Girl," in which he portrayed an alcoholic actor, and for which he received an Academy Award nomination. He returned to lightweight musical comedy fare in "High Society," in which he costarred with Frank Sinatra and Grace Kelly, and in which he introduced yet another hit song, "True Love."

In later years, Crosby continued to appear sporadically in films in which his talents as comedian and as singer were often used to best effect, notably in "Say One For Me," "The Road to Hong Kong," in which he was reunited with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour, and "Robin and the Seven Hoods," with Frank Sinatra. His last screen role was as the tragicomic Doc Boone in a remake of "Stagecoach," starring Ann-Margaret.

Increasingly, too, Crosby dedicated himself to television, a medium that had adopted him and in which he found a ready-made audience for the many facets of his artistic expression. In 1971, he appeared in an enormously effective horror film, "Dr. Cook's Garden," in which, for the first time, he played a villain. Another highlight of this phase of his career was "Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire: A Couple of Song-and-Dance Men," a special in which the two performers were seen in clips from "Holiday Inn" and "Blue Skies" and in which they recreated their duet from that last picture.

Fittingly enough for someone who all his life had projected the very image of casual insouciance, Crosby died of a heart attack in 1977, while playing golf in Spain. He not only left the image of an easygoing man whose effortless charm was an endearing characteristic; he also is remembered by his many fans and admirers as an artist whose casual air and a seemingly throwaway approach were elements of a talent that bordered on genius, simply because everything he did appeared so effortlessly natural, as though he were just having a good time, and sharing it with his audience in an act of delightful complicity. ●

ASTAIRE & CROSBY ON CD

The CD boom has been particularly kind to Fred **Astaire**, represented in the catalog by many titles that basically cover the full spectrum of his career.

Several compilations offer some of his early creations, most notably the songs he performed in the RKO films. One of the most interesting CDs among those is **Shall We Dance** (BBC CD 665), prepared by archivist Robert Parker in digital stereo, and containing such classics as "Fascinating Rhythm" (with solo accompaniment by George Gershwin), "Puttin' on the Ritz," "Night and Day," "No Strings," "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails," "Cheek to Cheek" and "A Fine Romance," among many others.

Some of the same songs can also be found in **Cheek to Cheek** (ProArte CDD 431), which also includes selections from "The Bandwagon," recorded at 33⅓ r.p.m. by RCA (in 1931!); and in **Fred Astaire Crazy Feet** (ASV CD AJA 5021 R), in which can also be found songs from "Funny Face," "Stop Flirting," "The Gay Divorcee" and "Lady Be Good," not to be found anywhere else. It should be noted, however, that the sound quality in both these titles comes somewhat below that of the BBC release.

The MGM period of Astaire's career is summarily surveyed in **Best of Fred Astaire** (MCA MCAD-31175), a 10-selection CD which includes tracks from "Easter Parade," "The Bandwagon" and "Silk Stockings," in a recording marred by remarkably poor sonics.

Few complete soundtracks have been issued on CD yet, though JVC in Japan has released **The Bandwagon** (VDP-5066) as well as the two **That's Entertainment** discs (VDP-901/2 and VDP-5173) which contain many selections performed by Astaire. In this country, the only full soundtrack of an Astaire film that is available is **Funny Face** (DRG CDS 15001), in which he starred with Audrey Hepburn and Kay Thompson.

Studio recordings are also sadly lacking in the compact disc format, though collectors should definitely look for **Fred Astaire Sings** (MCA MCAD-1552), in which he does 10 tunes accompanied by Pete King and his orchestra; and particularly **Astaire Fred** (DRG CDMRS 911), which contains selections from the soundtracks of three TV specials, "An Evening with Fred Astaire," "Another Evening with Fred Astaire" and "Astaire Time," from the 1960s, in what is one of the best collections available on CD.

Astaire can also be heard with Bing Crosby in selections from Irving Berlin's **Holiday Inn** (MCA MCAD-25205). Like most reissues on the label, however, the less-than-acceptable sonic quality distracts from the pleasure one might have listening to this album.

MCA, incidentally, has failed so far to take advantage of the fact that many of the recordings made by Crosby during his career were for Decca (MCA's predecessor), with which he was under exclusive contract for many years. Some of the best sides ever recorded by the singer still lay dormant in the vaults and await reissue.

The early part of Crosby's career, on the other hand, is very well documented, most notably in a superb three-CD set from Columbia, **Bing Crosby: The Crooner, The Columbia Years 1928-1934** (C3K 44229), which contains more than 60 selections, including many available here for the first time. Carefully remastered, these sides present Crosby in his formative years, first as a member of the Rhythm Boys, then as a blossoming solo performer.

Other recordings from that era can also be found on yet another Robert Parker production for BBC, **Bing Crosby, 1927-1934** (BBC CD 648); and on **Pennies from Heaven** (ProArte CDD 432), in which the duplications are fortunately kept to a minimum.

Finally, collectors are advised to look for three CDs issued by Silver Eagle that were apparently recorded between 1953 and 1957. Produced under license from Bing Crosby Enterprises, these CDs come with the seal of authenticity and present the crooner, supported by the Buddy Cole Trio and by Pete Moore and his orchestra, in what amounts to an overview of his whole career. Released in 1987, on the 10th anniversary of his death, the CDs (SED-10633) are individually titled **Bing Sings All About Love, Bing Swings Straight Down the Middle** and **From Broadway to Hollywood**, and contain 73 selections, all available here for the first time. ●

****
BITS 'N' PIECES
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* Last year, Bruskin Associates, a market research organisation in the USA, conducted a survey in which they asked 1000 men and women: "If a TV program were created which depicted past events in the lives of well-known people, which of these personalities do you feel the public would be most be interested in watching - Marilyn Monroe, Bing Crosby, John Lennon, John F Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Howard Hughes, Grace Kelly, General MacArthur, Lucille Ball?"

The results:

Person	Total %	Men %	Women %
John F Kennedy	78	74	81
Lucille Ball	76	66	85
Marilyn Monroe	57	55	58
General MacArthur	55	61	48
Bing Crosby	53	46	60
Grace Kelly	51	40	61
Howard Hughes	48	56	42
Richard Nixon	46	51	42
John Lennon	44	43	44

* With regret we note the sudden passing of longtime member Marjorie DeRyk. Marjorie and her son Peter were regular attendees of our meetings for many years and we extend our sincere condolences to Peter and other members of the family. At our February meeting, all members signed a card for Peter and we received the following response: "Than you to all the members of the VBCS for the card and the expressions of sympathy over the loss of my mother. Although Mum and I weren't great mixers, we always enjoyed the Crosby meetings as they were something we could do together. I will try to attend at least some future meetings and keep supporting the society as long as it continues, as I'm sure this would make Mum happy and of course because I'm still a great Bing fan."

* Whilst on the depressing subject of human mortality, we have to note the passing of two more Crosby names on both sides of the Atlantic. In the USA, Academy Award winning composer James Van Heusen who was associated with numerous Crosby hits, particularly with his partner Johnny Burke. In the UK, we have also lost Reg Bristo, editor of BING magazine and a highly respected nostalgia expert in his own right. Hopefully, if one is forthcoming, we will publish a tribute to Reg in our next issue.

* The new Secretary and Treasurer of the International Crosby Circle in the UK is Michael Crampton while Editorship of BING has been taken over by Ken Crossland, assisted by Malcolm Macfarlane. The magazine has been totally refurbished and, most important, is being published by one of the Crosby world's greatest friends, John Joyce. The new look BING has a glossy cover and is professionally typeset and printed throughout so that reproduction is superb. Subscription rates p.a. are UK £5.00, Europe £6.00, USA £9.00 and Australia £10.50. All correspondance should be addressed to Malcom Macfarlane, 16 Bracey Rise, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7AX, England.

by Leigh Brown

FRANK SINATRA

The Swoon Years (1942 - 1946)

Consider, if you would, the plight of young singers who started out in the late '30s or early '40s: Where to find that first measure of success? Some sought it on radio. Others tried night clubs. Those who also had a bent toward acting aimed for theater or films. But the likeliest route lay in joining a dance band.

Band leaders were at the top of popular music and there was no better showcase for a beginning singer than with a band. In the more popular orchestras they often became minor luminaries with a following of their own. All, however, were subservient to the demands of the dance band setting: a vocalist was just one part of a large organization popping up in the midst of an arrangement to give voice to the songs of the day. But this would soon change as the makings of a trend were afoot.

In 1940, the biggest selling record, "I'll Never Smile Again" by the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, was more of a feature for its vocalists. The following year, another big hit for Dorsey, in which the band also took a back seat, was "This Love Of Mine." The singer figuring prominently in the first number and practically the whole show in the second was Frank Sinatra, who celebrates his fiftieth year in show business in 1989.

Sinatra was not alone in taking the play away from the orchestra. Other band singers were becoming more important factors in a band's popularity. Nowhere was this more noticeable than in the Jimmy Dorsey orchestra: amid much success in 1941, it almost disappeared behind the vocals of Helen O'Connell and Bob Eberly. Sinatra considered Eberly his biggest rival among the band singers. Years later, he allowed that had Eberly gone out as a single before he (Sinatra) did, Eberly, and not Sinatra, might well have become the rage of the bobby-soxers.

The pop music scene in '40-'41, however, didn't seem all that conducive toward success for band singers going solo. Jack Leonard (Sinatra's predecessor with Dorsey) and Eddy Howard, both of whom had made their mark with bands, went out as singles before Sinatra and saw their popularity decline sharply. But a war and a record ban would alter the situation to Sinatra's advantage when he stepped out.

In 1942, the nation was struggling through the first year of its involvement in World War II. Much of the machinery which drove the pre-war economy was at a standstill for the duration. The band business was no exception, with its additional burden of a record ban called by the musicians' union in August. The thinking among many in the union was that records weren't all that beneficial to musicians, who supposedly had their employment in clubs and radio at risk due to "canned" music. Though this was something that would manifest itself later, during the war years bands probably worked as much as ever, due to a great public need for live music as a reprieve from the wearying effect of the war, and also because of a war-time economy in which dollars didn't buy much of anything else.

However, records had come to play an important part in promoting these bands, and now the lack of them worked to the general disadvantage of all orchestras. The name bands survived the ban as well as the shortages in manpower and material occasioned by the war much better than the newer, lesser-known outfits: popularity polls taken between '41 and '45 show the top 20 bands remained about the same. Soon jukeboxes and disc jockey shows were cluttered with the same old faces, which imparted a certain static quality to the big band scene.

On the other hand, life in general in the country was as unsettled as would be expected with the nation on a war-time footing. Most young men were in the armed forces. This left on the home front many young women, for whom, romantically, these were frustrating times. Their yearnings, as spelled out in the hit song "They're Either Too Young Or Too Old," would soon have an inordinate influence on the nation's musical preference, centered primarily upon one thin singer.

That singer, Frank Sinatra, got his first break with a name band in 1939. In one of Sinatra's first mentions in a national magazine, Harry James, speaking to a *downbeat* reporter in '39, said this about the youngster in his band: "The kid's name is Sinatra. He considers himself the greatest vocalist in the business. Get that! No one ever heard of him. He's never had a hit record. He looks like a wet rag. But he says he is the greatest." There followed three years with Tommy Dorsey in which Sinatra rose to #1 male band singer.

In September 1942, Sinatra left Dorsey and was promptly signed by CBS for his own radio program and for records under the Columbia label. He appeared in the film *Reveille With Beverly*, where he sang "Night And Day," which he had recorded earlier in the year under his own name for Bluebird and now chose as his radio theme.

Dec. 30, 1942: On this date Frank Sinatra's solo career really took off. Opening at the Paramount theater in New York City as an "extra added attraction" on a bill headed by Benny Goodman, Sinatra stepped on stage for the first time that fateful day and was greeted by such an outcry as hadn't happened at the Paramount since Goodman himself had had them jitterbugging in the aisles six years earlier. Only now it was shrieks of adoration from Sinatra's female fans, which would soon be labeled swooning and bring him national attention as nothing else had previously. Sinatra was held over into February. (Also helping to make the country Sinatra-conscious: In January '43, one of his last records with Dorsey, "There Are Such Things," reached #1 on the record popularity charts.)

Now a whirlwind of activity began. On February 15, Sinatra started singing on one of the highest rated radio programs, *Your Hit Parade*. He was signed by RKO for pictures. After the Paramount came other sensational appearances, Sinatra now billed as "The Voice That Is Thrilling Millions" — soon shortened by his fans to simply "The Voice." In late spring Sinatra returned to the Paramount, this time as the main attraction.

When Sinatra went to California in the summer to sing with the symphony at the Hollywood Bowl, he met with perhaps his first run-in with the press. The day before his appearance, Sinatra was quoted as saying that he would sing "Old Man River" "as it had never been sung before." This seemed like a rather conceited thing to say and much was made of this in the local dailies. During the concert, Sinatra saw fit to explain what he had really intended by the remark. He figured regular patrons at the Hollywood Bowl were used to hearing "Old Man River" sung by singers like Paul Robeson. He didn't sing that way. But he felt there was a place for his way of singing, too. Sinatra then proceeded to do "Old Man River" differently from the way it had been done before, *his* way.

The record labels, still at odds with the union, initially met the demand for Sinatra recordings by reissuing old band

sides. "All Or Nothing At All," done with James in '39, and "In The Blue Of Evening," done with Dorsey in '42, both went to the top of the charts. "It's Always You," another one with Dorsey, originating with Bing Crosby in '41, hadn't been a hit, but now was, for Sinatra.

Next, the labels tried the largely ineffectual experiment of all-vocal recordings, with choral groups providing the backing. Sinatra's first release of this sort brought him into battle with Dick Haymes, who recorded "You'll Never Know" after Sinatra did but got his version on the market first; both were big sellers, with Haymes slightly ahead. Sinatra's next four sides, "Sunday, Monday Or Always," "If You Please," "People Will Say We're In Love" and "Oh What A Beautiful Morning," brought him squarely up against a well-established Bing Crosby; all four sold well but were second to Crosby.

Crosby was Sinatra's ultimate competitor. Since the early '30s, Crosby's singing had been the standard by which all other male pop singers were judged. Though originally husky and passionate, his style soon evolved into one that was smooth, light and jauntily romantic. Sinatra, too, was smooth, light and romantic, only more so. Further, his singing was informed with a greater vulnerability than was Crosby's, a heart-on-sleeve sensibility that made Crosby, in contrast, appear almost the insouciant with his more restrained approach. But each in his own way had the ability to sing feelingly without making a big production out of it, no easy task.

So two great singers. And despite the competition between them, much mutual respect. As Crosby put it at the time, "Frank Sinatra is the kind of singer who comes along once in a lifetime," adding wittily, "but why did it have to be *my* lifetime?" Sinatra, for his part, has always been vocal in his admiration for Crosby.

In 1943, the weekly record popularity charts told the story of the Sinatra-Crosby rivalry. In the last week of September, with the assistance of one apiece by James and Dorsey, Sinatra had five records in the Top 10. Two months later, Crosby matched that figure, and in the very last week of the year, with "White Christmas" returning for its second season, managed to have six in the Top 10.

Sinatra's rise to popularity came when Crosby was at his all-time peak. Polls taken in 1943-45 bear this out. Even where Sinatra's support was strongest, with high-schoolers and collegiates, it was still pretty much of a toss-up as to who was the more popular. Among servicemen, irked that Sinatra wasn't in the armed forces and perhaps envious of all the attention he was receiving from Young American Womanhood, the decisive favorite was Crosby. Those over-40 on the home front, not surprisingly, also gave Crosby the nod.

One advantage Crosby had over his young rival was that by late '43, after Decca had reached an accord with the musicians' union, he could record with orchestral accompaniment, something Sinatra wasn't able to do for another year. So Sinatra stopped making all-vocal recordings (which he hadn't been keen on doing in the first place) and concentrated on radio and theater appearances, as well as films, and left the record scene, for the moment, to Crosby. (Crosby's solid status with the record-buying public in '44 was such that even his off-form "I'll Be Seeing You" reached #1 on the charts while a better rendition by Sinatra with Dorsey peaked at about #7.)

When Sinatra finally was able to record with a band behind him, what did he do but wax "White Christmas," fast becoming a Crosby standard. Such effrontery may not have been wholly Sinatra's doing: Columbia, in a fit of pique when Charlie Spivak switched to Victor records, removed from sale his entire output for the label, including a '42 recording of "White Christmas," and may have urged a replacement version on Sinatra. But whatever the situation, Sinatra never serious challenged Crosby on this, his best known and biggest seller.

Even with Sinatra recording against him again, Crosby held to a big lead in record sales in 1945, perhaps his biggest year. Still, it was a very good year for The Voice. Superbly supported by Axel Stordahl's arrangements, he numbered among his hits "Saturday Night," "I Should Care," "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "Nancy." A successful USO tour overseas with Phil Silvers helped break down servicemen's resistance to him. Speaking out against intolerance before high school assemblies garnered Sinatra much praise and led to the acclaimed film short *The House I Live In*.

Sinatra in '45 also appeared in his first major film (and his first for MGM), co-starring with Gene Kelly in *Anchors Aweigh*, for which Sammy Cahn and Julie Styne wrote the score. Sinatra recorded four of the songs, and when all of them failed to make the Top 20 it caused a momentary rift between him and the songwriters, not helped any when two subsequent Cahn-Styne songs *not* written for Sinatra, "It's Been A Long Long Time" and "Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow," became two of the biggest hits of the year. Cahn and Styne recovered by providing Sinatra with "Five Minutes More," his top seller the following year.

In 1946, Sinatra had nine singles make the Top 20, three more than Crosby, and the most he has ever had in one year. In various polls taken that year he was the winner over Crosby in over half, and second to him in the rest. By now it was clear that Sinatra was more than just a war years swoon sensation. He had been the main impetus in shifting pop music emphasis from the bands to the singers. And he had done it with more first-rate records than anyone else at the time, Crosby included.

In conclusion, consider these recordings: "Night And Day," "The Song Is You," "The Lamplighter's Serenade," "Nancy," "Someone To Watch Over Me," "Try A Little Tenderness," "The Girl That I Marry," "Day By Day," "The House I Live In," "I Fall In Love Too Easily," "The Things We Did Last Summer," "Soliloquy," "September Song," "Begin The Beguine," "My Melancholy Baby"— all classic sides by Sinatra, '42-'46. Give them a twirl on your turntable and revel in, even swoon to, some of the best Sinatra ever.●

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CROSBY PROFILES - RALPH S HARDING
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by Ralph Harding
With >editorial comments< by Vernon Wesley Taylor

>Being one of the more visible Bing Crosby record collectors for more than a generation, Ralph S. Harding posed a bit too much of a problem when it came time to have him profiled in The Crosby Voice. An American would not be one to take on the job, though he has many Stateside friends, of whom this writer is proud to be able to say that he is one and has been for more than twenty-five years. Surely another Englishman would bring more credibility to the task.

So I wrote to my old friend and asked him to cast about for a more proper Boswell. In reply he said that his choice would have been Syd Dorrington but that worthy happened to be on a world cruise at the time. Other choices were, for one reason or another, also presently unavailable.

"Therefore," he went on to say, "I have attempted to compose this profile myself." Never one to allow false modesty to control his thinking, he did just that. In strong phrases that adequately cover the subject, Ralph composed the following notes about himself, couching them in the third person because he supposed they would be re-written by another. To have

them done so, however, would have muffled much of the charm of the famed collector that comes across in the plain reading.

Harding, as much as anyone who ever 'Collected Bing' can truthfully be said to have been one of those relative few who brought our grand hobby to the very fascinating position it enjoys today. His definitive collection, the fine magazine he founded, the excellent discography (still unsurpassed) he helped put together, his later work on such projects as the excellent Chronological Bing Crosby LP series, above all his fabulous enthusiasm have done so much to have helped us all to become greater enthusiasts ourselves in Crosbyana. Vernon Wesley Taylor<

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RALPH S. HARDING - A PROFILE OF A BING CROSBY ENTHUSIAST AND APPRECIATOR

In the summer of 1970, a letter was delivered to Ralph Harding's London address with just the words "The Crosby Collector" written on the envelope. Without any investigation the Post Office delivered this letter within 36 hours of it being mailed. This delivery amply illustrates the fact that not only was "The Crosby Collector" widely known among Bing Crosby collectors and enthusiasts, but the Post Office was equally aware of its existence. This magazine, the brain-child of Ralph, was highly acclaimed by Crosby collectors throughout the world and even to this day, eighteen years after its demise, it is still regarded as the finest and most informative magazine ever produced regarding the recordings, the work and the life and times of the greatest popular singer and film-star of this or any other century - Bing Crosby.

In 1965, the editorial confusion of the "Crosby Post" threatened any further publication. Ralph Harding stepped into the gap, producing an issue prior to launching a new magazine which he devoted to "the discerning enthusiast, collector and appreciator of Bing Crosby", a byline he featured throughout every issue.

Over a period of seven years, 67 issues were published and distributed and the final issue contained one hundred pages. At that time the circulation was in excess of one thousand copies and served Bing enthusiasts in over 30 countries. At one end of the scale there were 600 subscribers in the U.K., 200 in North America and 100 in Australia. At the other end, Ralph had one subscriber in the Soviet Union (who received a gratus copy because he couldn't send roubles), one in Iceland and one in Peru. Without doubt, no other Bing Crosby magazine enjoyed such a wide circulation.

>Vern Taylor Note: "It is not always easy to write about oneself," Ralph explained, "when there is so much to say", but I think the reader will agree he has managed well, so far. Before he is permitted to continue, something should be said for at least one of us whose life he touched. It is recalled that I was one of those with whom he states he formed a 'common bond'. Whatever he may mean by that, I freely confess that I have not been the same since that day when a letter-flimsy of his asked "Do you happen to have any English records of Bing's?" Then some years later, his magazine discussed the Crosby collector who was too private for his own or anybody else's good, preferring to remain what he called the 'closet collector', a

species of 'Bing Nut' who seldom communicated with others of his kind and thus, once again changing one collector's life for the better.<

Unfortunately the incredible success and popularity of "The Crosby Collector" led to its demise. As Ralph explained to numerous enquiries, "The magazine became a Frankenstein monster. It became too big to cope with. I was carrying out a normal nine to five job as an Accountant and every evening I was pounding a typewriter until the early hours of the morning, fortified with black coffee and packs of cigarettes, typing from 70 to 100 stencils, writing and editing articles, printing the whole including photos and covers, collating up to 5000 sheets of paper, binding and finally mailing a thousand envelopes. It was a one-man labour of love, relieved only by a friend who proof-read, another who helped collate and another dear friend who addressed all the envelopes. There were many times when Diana, my wife, had to introduce me to my children because I hardly saw them. My household chores were neglected, my social life was non-existent and only my devotion and enthusiasm for the project kept me going.

The final crunch came when I had to publish and distribute the first edition of "The Road To Hollywood". The production team of Fred Reynolds, Les Phythian, Bob Roberts and myself had completed the drafts although Fred Reynolds had provided the bulk of the information contained therein. The printing, production and distribution fell on my shoulders and something had to go to produce the film book. No one was prepared to assist with the continued publication of "The C.C." and therefore, sadly, the magazine folded. Happily Reg Bristo soldiered on with "BING", ably assisted by John Bassett who later published his excellent "BINGVILLE NEWS" and Al Sutton who renovated "BINGANG" from a "fan" magazine to one of the best Bing Crosby magazines ever produced."

There are many collectors who would say that Ralph's collecting and amassing of his Bing Crosby collection of some 1200 78 r.p.m. records and about 900 microgroove records was his greatest achievement. Others might say that the publication of "The Crosby Collector" and the formation of "The International Crosby Society", the meetings at the Albion Hotel he organised or the special film shows he arranged at the Starlight Cinema in the Mayfair Hotel would take precedence. Or even the large sums of money he collected for the National Society For Mentally Handicapped Children from the readers of his magazine and the auction of tapes and records.

Ralph would disagree. He regards his finest achievement as that of bringing together Bing collectors all over the world and particularly in America. By publishing the names and addresses of collectors, many American Bing enthusiasts, particularly those on the West Coast, were able to correspond with each other and the same applied to the U.K. and Australia, thus forming a common bond.

Ralph Harding first started buying Bing Crosby records as a young schoolboy in 1931. At that time, he was madly in love with the pretty assistant of the Grammar School tuck-shop who asked if he had heard the latest Bing Crosby record. He hadn't so he immediately went out to buy it. In those days, his record buying was reserved for those sold in Woolworth Stores at sixpence each. But Brunswick records were very expensive at 2/6 (now 12½ pence or approximately 25 cents) and his earned pocket-money could only

stretch to one record each month. So Jack Payne and Ambrose records were discarded for those of Bing.

At the outbreak of World War II, his collection numbered some 60 records and he had yet to realise that Bing recorded with Paul Whiteman and the Dorseys. Six years in the war changed everything. He discovered V-discs, he met American G.I.'s who told him more about Bing than he had ever known and he learned about Bing's earliest recordings.

From 1946, Ralph decided to obtain every single record that Bing had ever made. It was easy to buy the Brunswick label when it appeared in stores, but obtaining the HMV and Victor records was a different story involving "junk-shopping" - spending hours wading through thousands of old records in second-hand stores, street markets and the like. Ralph knew every inch of the Portobello Road, East Street and Club Row in his search for the old and mouldy. During this period, Ralph met many other collecting enthusiasts and built up his second love, that of collecting jazz records. Eventually he built up a superb collection of about 10,000 jazz records and an enviable collection of Bing. "Face The Music Medley" had eluded him for many years but about 1950, his devotion was rewarded when he finally obtained five copies from America from four different traders. Two copies went to his friend of many years, Frank Grant. One copy went to an equally good fiend Les Phythian, and Ralph kept two copies for himself.

Ralph has visited America on many occasions, and on the first time in 1974, he met several of his greatest American friends and collectors of Bing. To this day, they are still his very best friends - such enthusiasts as Vernon Wesley Taylor, the late Herbie Bootman, Al Sutton, Frontis "Wig" Wiggins, Howard Levine and many others; all have afforded him great friendship and hospitality. All of these great collectors and enthusiasts have always extended their solid friendship and great kindness, their expertise, knowledge and assistance in matters pertaining to Bing.

The collecting and studying of the art and talents of Bing Crosby has been Ralph's obsession for the past 57 years. He has devoted his life outside of his job and his family to this end. Recently he decided to retire from this hobby and placed his entire Bing collection on the market in order to leave his children a cash inheritance rather than a collection with which they would have little interest. However, common sense prevailed when he realised that he would be parting with his life's work. As he succinctly put it, "If I can't take 'em with me, I won't go" to which he added, "But if I have to go, I'll wrap 'em all up in asbestos and they might survive in Hell!"

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>Vern Taylor note: Today, Ralph and his wife, Diane, are retired and dwelling on a hilltop in Wales, his life's career as a government investigator behind him, but his hobby goes on. Surely he is a good example of the Bing Crosby Record Collector who has given more than he has taken. "Oh yes, certainly," Bing himself told a timid interviewer in 1976 who was seeking his opinion on those who followed his career, "I know Ralph, he is a good fella. He's one of those assiduous people who seem to know more about what I've done than I do." Enough said.<

(Bob Machliss postscript: Funny how events have a way of catching up with us. I have had this article on Ralph for well over a year, but because of the long gaps between issues, I have not had a chance to publish it before now. Since it was written, Ralph has obviously had a change of heart as in our last issue we featured a number of Ralph's Whiteman Crosbys for auction.

I couldn't end this article without noting the kindness and hospitality that Ralph bestowed upon myself and my wife when we visited England back in 1971. Thanks again Ralph.)

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TREVOR WAGSTAFF
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By Keith Parkinson

Trevor is known to readers of 'Bing Pictorial' as The Radio Man because of the column he writes for that magazine surveying Bing's airtime on various programmes. Perhaps he has a vested in the plays that Bing receives because he does a fair amount of lobbying to keep the Crosby memory alive - as Radio 2 listeners in the U.K. will confirm. On the public relations side, Trevor also played a major part in the placing of the Bing Crosby memorial plaque at the London Palladium. Readers will have seen photographs of this but I know there is nothing to equal the feeling of going into the foyer of the world's foremost variety theatre and looking at this tribute.

Now that we've placed Trevor in context as far as his general Bing activities are concerned, let us trace his growing enthusiasm with Crosbyana. This formalised itself in the early 70s when he joined the International Crosby Circle after having read Leslie Gaylor's address on an album sleeve. This confirms the importance of publicising Bing and reminds us of the job of unpaid ambassador carried out so well by Leslie. Before 1972, Trevor was out there alone building on a record collection that goes back exactly forty years, a time that coincided with his financial independence when he took on his first job in the city of London. His musical preference for Bing built up from hearing the Crosby Voice on the BBC light programme and also Radio Luxembourg in the 1940s. That decade was also Hollywood's golden era and Trevor's cinema visits caught Bing at his popularity peak in the 'Road' films, 'Holiday Inn', 'Going My Way' and 'The Bells of St Marys'.

We all have memories of starting our record collections and acquiring all that we could afford at a time when 78s stayed in the catalogues for years. Here are Trevor's evocative memories:

"Having studied the Bing song listings in the Brunswick catalogue, I started purchasing Bing's 78s at six shillings and seven pence each from a marvellous shop in Romford, 'Wells Music'. They had rows of racks about six feet high and never failed to produce the requested record within a minute."

Nowadays, the collection is vaster. Four hundred albums share house room with books about Bing, sheet music, cassettes and a treasured possessions: a cap worn at the London Palladium. This revives happy memories of when Trevor obtained autographs of all the Crosby family. Trevor's presence that hot day also gives us an insight into the way that Bing's show business career was accommodated by his second family. This is how Trevor remembers that day:

"On Friday, June 25th, 1976, I saw Bing in concert. Everything was magic that night. I saw Bing arrive at the stage door, I got Rosemary Clooney's signature on by copy of 'Bing' by Charles Thompson, and, after a truly memorable concert leaving me on Cloud 9, my wife Pat and I exited into Ramillies Street at the back of the Palladium. The first thing we noticed was Bing's car and chauffeur, and the United Artists recording unit. They were trying a playback of 'That's What Life Is All About'. It sounded fantastic. Then I heard someone say that Bing was going to sign books and records and that a man from Australia was over just to be at the concerts. This was Gordon Wall! I saw Nathanial and Mary and asked them for their signatures. Then I saw Bing in a doorway signing things. I joined the queue and got his autograph. Turning around, I saw Kathryn sitting in the front seat of the car. I passed the book in, which she signed, saying 'I wish he would hurry up. He is very tired.' Then I noticed that Harry Junior had entered the back seat with two girls. I passed the book in for his signature and was met with a groan and a comment, but one of the girls said 'Sign it' which he did."

Another memory illustrated the care Bing took in encouraging his supporters. Trevor again:

"I have one letter from Bing which I have framed. He answered each question I asked of him and said that he was impressed with my large collection of his work. That was in 1973. Years later, I realised that it was, in fact, a small collection at that time. What a marvellous man he was, to put it mildly."

Trevor's musical life is mainly devoted to Bing, although he says his tastes range from Bing to Beethoven and that he has a liking for classical music and opera. However, it is requests for Bing recordings that appear on the postcards which he sends to the BBC. It was the radio which sold Trevor on Bing Crosby a long time ago and Trevor's efforts will keep that voice on the airwaves for other generations.

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WHO'S THIS?
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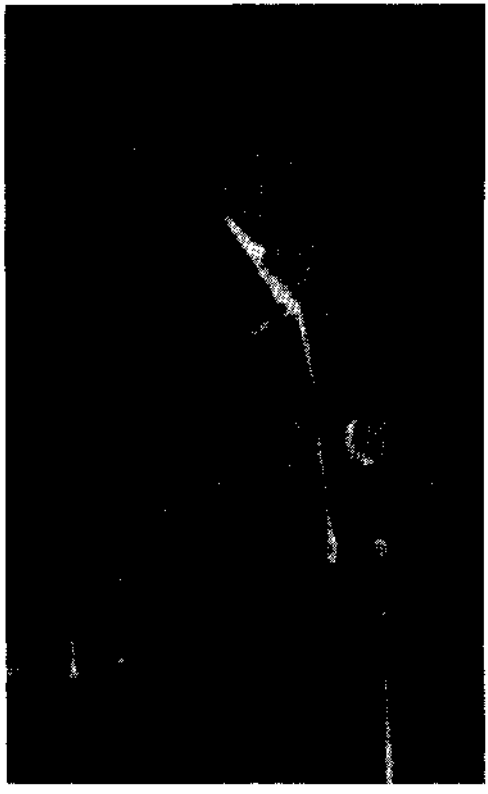
(For the answer, see after "Bing's Sermon" at the end of the magazine)



Remember the old ABC Weekly? Unfortunately the member who sent this in only gave us the cover. If you have a rare magazine that you are prepared to lend us, we promise to take good care of it and return it as soon as it is copied. BM

the HOLLYWOOD

PALACE

FOR

PRESENTATION ON ABC-TV

* SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1966 *

PROGRAM

NOTE: The position which an act is allotted on the program does not in the least reflect upon its merit. When a bill is made up almost exclusively of headliners — a frequent occurrence at the Hollywood Palace — every number is worthy of the "star spot" on ordinary vaudeville bills. It is only fair to the artist, therefore, to judge his work solely upon its merits.

OUR HOST **BING CROSBY** MAKING THIS A CHRISTMAS EVE-ENT

KATHRYN - HARRY - NATHANIEL - MARY FRANCES

THE FAMILY SPENDS XMAS WITH YOU

KUBAN COSSACKS High Steppers from the Steppes

HE MAILED HIS LAFFS EARLY ← **BOB NEWHART**

KATE SMITH Lighting Up Our Tree With Song

Bing and the Jingle Belle CROSBY & SMITH

★ ★

EXCESS BAGGAGE *THE ACT THAT PUT THE WOW IN BOW-WOW*

LOVELIEST XMAS CARD OF THE YEAR **CYD CHARISSE**

RENE & HIS PUPPETS A YULETIDE DELIGHT

Decking the Halls with Sounds of Music BING & KATHRYN AND THE KIDS

Bing Sings White Christmas

Happy Holiday To All - And To All A Goodnight

Mitchell Ayres AND THE Hollywood Palace Orchestra

A ZODIAC PRODUCTION

Executive Producer - NICK VANOFF

Producer - WILLIAM O. HARBACH

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COLLECTORS'
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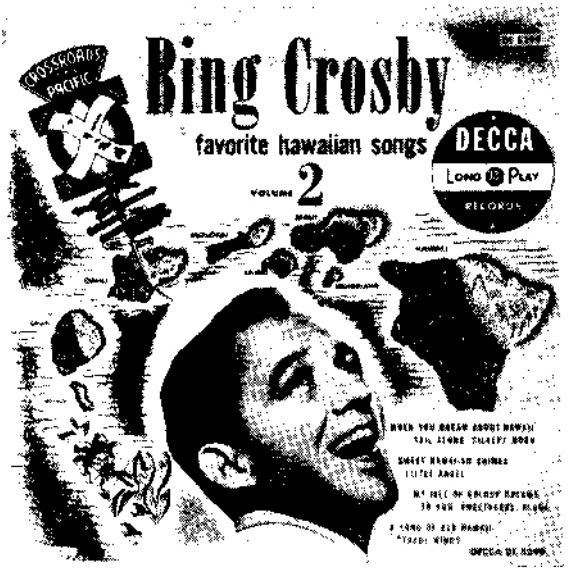

Back in the day's before LPs, as most older collectors will recall, the record companies put together groups of best-selling discs in special albums of 78s. "Christmas Greetings" is the great granddad of what was to become Bing's best-selling LP from the 1950s onwards.

Of course, when long-playing records did eventuate, they proved to be another bonanza. 10" LPs were the most common for a while, and dozens of Crosby compilations such as the one at left were produced.

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CORNER
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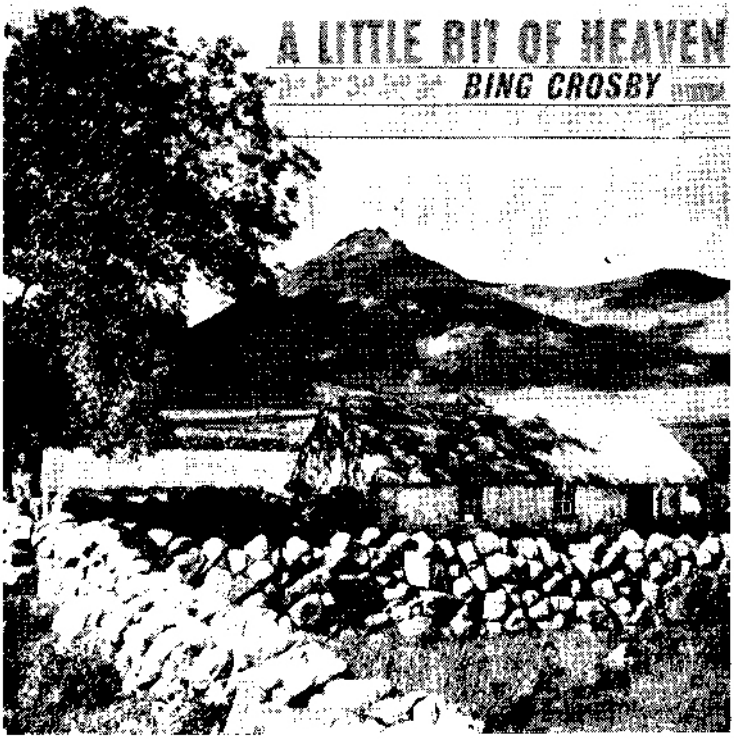
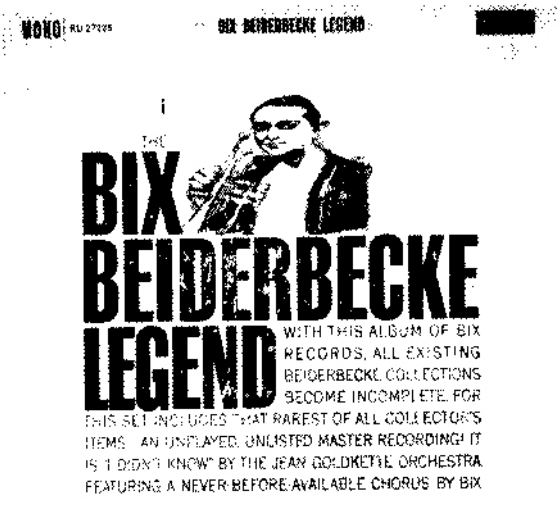


Bing's Irish-styled records were best-sellers for years and the most common LP re-issues were issued here as WHEN IRISH EYES ARE SMILING and SHILLELAGHS AND SHAMROCKS. Somewhere along the way, this issue also popped up which included tracks from both the above plus, 'Mary's a Grand Old Name'.

Back before Bing's Whiteman output was widely available on LP, this LP which featured several Crosby tracks was very welcome. Interestingly, I once saw a Japanese import copy in which the super-rare Bix track mentioned on the cover was replaced - probably because the one-only test-pressing has a crack part way through!



(From Harper's Magazine in 1947)

After Hours

So GREAT is the gentle talent of Bing Crosby for making any song appear inconsequential that it may have distracted your attention from the oddest features of "Riders in the Sky," a modernized cowboy tune that he has recorded in such a fashion as to bring the form up to date and nearly finish it off. As a cowboy lament, "Riders in the Sky" is a phony from the first "Yippee-i-ay, yippee-i-o," and those who put store by the originals are likely to complain that the slowing of tempo and the stretching out of terminal chords is a first-rate exhibit of a good idea gone second-rate in the hands of its imitators. For example, there is an unexpected element of barber-shop quartet in it, and the chords that are slurred over also slide downward by half tones like the phrase endings in "Sweet Adeline." Yet if this would be heretical in Texas, Mr. Crosby does not seem to care, no more than do the teen-agers who have been singing a high-pitched and discordant version of "Riders in the Sky" across the street from me on warm summer evenings. Though some of the leap-frog intervals in the melody ought to make it difficult for an informal sing-fest, there are apparently enough parts of the tune that are vaguely familiar to tide over the untutored voice and perhaps to account for its popularity. "Riders in the Sky," in fact, is far more interesting in its derivations than in its decadence.

What troubles the cowboy-lover may be that the echoes falling most arrestingly on the ear are from other traditions—as far apart as the home front in the Civil War and the barracks ballads of the British Empire. The opening phrase of "Riders in the Sky" is virtually identical with those of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" and "Danny Deever"; it is a minor-key bugle call more war-like than Western. In "Riders in the Sky," moreover, there is another foreign element which I have tentatively identified as the Slavic, or Red Army Chorus, influence. In the back of his head, either Mr. Crosby or his guitar accompanist was hearing "Polyushka Polye," the "Meadowlands" of the Cossack cavalry that was briefly popular after still another war as an item of Russian-American friendship. Like "Riders in the Sky," it brings horsemen in from the right to exit left and the melodies could almost serve as obbligatos to each other. Mr. Crosby need not be blamed for this unconscious borrowing, however, since American soldiers returning from the European Theater were known at least once to have sung "Polyushka Polye," in Russian, around a campfire, and its effect on "Riders in the Sky" can best be likened to an internationalist undercurrent breaking momentarily on the surface.

For the defining characteristic is Mr. Crosby's voice, which somehow manages to bind these discordant reverberations into a final product that is effortless and natural. It is in the lower registers that he shines, and it is a pleasure—as it was in "The Atcheson, Topeka, and the Santa Fe" four years ago—to hear him dip down a fifth and come up refreshed. Again the purist may be offended by a process that can put the four seasons through a juke-box and make them all come out sounding like a White Christmas, but this is Mr. Crosby's *forte* and the point at which

he joins a great—though insufficiently familiar—American tradition. It is what links him with a singer who preceded him at the top of national popularity, whose records were legendary best sellers, and who had the same ability to digest the indigestible. The singer's name was Jimmie Rodgers, and if Mr. Crosby has not served to introduce him it may be added that a memorial album of his records has recently been issued.

Jimmie Rodgers was a blue yodeler—or rather, *the* blue yodeler. He was born in Mississippi, the son of a section foreman on the Mobile & Ohio, and in his early teens he went to work for his father; for fourteen years he worked on the railroads. Eventually bad health forced him into the business of singing for a living; and while he was on a road show, shortly after playing for the first time over the radio in Asheville, he was heard by an RCA Victor representative and brought north to make records. A few weeks later he was summoned to make enough more recordings to keep up with the demand. He came in on an earlier era of modern popular music, when the phonograph rather than the radio was still the way of reaching the widest national audience. As recently as last year (he died in 1933), his records were still listed in the Sears Roebuck catalogue, which is an indication both of the rural roots of his appeal and of their depth. One of his records, "Blue Yodel No. 1"—there are fourteen other variations—is said to have sold over five hundred thousand, and it comes first in the memorial album.

In "Blue Yodel" there is a battle of conflicting elements that makes Mr. Crosby's effort in arbitration with "Riders in the Sky" seem easy; it is the real Meeting of East and West. Without the slightest hesitation, Mr. Rodgers undertakes to yodel the blues, and though it may have been supposed that there were mountaineers in Memphis I refuse to accept any contention that a significant number were Swiss. This the folk-singers of the Southland thought up for themselves. With Jimmie Rodgers, the hillbilly tradition swallowed yodeling—along with blues themes, convict themes, railroad themes, themes of protest. If you find this mixture difficult to conceive, imagine a clear nasal voice, over a guitar background, much like any that can be heard on the Southern networks of a Sunday morning. Further imagine him to be singing, along the immutable blues sequence of chords, words like these—

> T for Texas,
> T for Tennessee,
> T for Thelma—
> That gal that made a wreck out of me

—and on the "me" letting his voice slide up an octave and break into a yodel. Once heard, never forgotten.

Jimmie Rodgers's other pieces in the album are mainly within the tradition—among them a spirited but normal rendering of "Frankie and Johnny"—though at some surprising moments here and in a song like "The Brakeman's Blues" there will be a burst of Alpine trilling. Allusions to railroading are frequent, as you would expect, and there are also thematic references that come straight from the native book—the virtues of Memphis, the unsatisfactory quality of Georgia water, or the fact that things always look better down the track. Mr. Rodgers's appearance, in a straw hat and tight bow tie, was also pleasantly conventional, and his expression was corny but unabashed, a combination of those of Noel Coward and the late Jimmy Walker. He is said to have been much beloved, and I am sure that in ranch- and farm-houses everywhere there are well-worn records of his even in these days when the unselective radio is always at hand.

So I cannot be a party to the view that "Riders in the Sky" represents a decline in the national institutions, or that this trend toward cultural cannibalism is either very new or evil of itself. I somehow doubt that cowboy songs were ever such pure specimens that we should worry over their corruption, and I claim it should not be held against Mr. Crosby that he is—like the radio—omnivorous and unselective. Here only is he departing from the way of virtue, as set out by Jimmie Rodgers and the men on the railroad gangs who in their turn taught him. They welded together disparate ideas, but Crosby is all-embracing. He will sing anything—from "Sweet Lelani" through "Tico, Tico" and "Comme-ci, Comme-ca" to an "Ave Maria"—and sound like no one but himself. This is not entirely a useless talent at a time when barricades are falling, and Mr. Crosby may even be giving them a push.

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HEADING FOR THE 1990s - THE 24TH ANNUAL DINNER MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

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by Keith Parkinson

Autumn in Rounhay Park, Leeds, West Yorkshire means that the Mansion Hotel in its parkland setting becomes the focal point for Bing business through the ICC.

1989's event was tinged with sadness following the recent death of stalwart collector Frank Murphy. We also learned of Reg Bristo's continuing ill health and his relinquishment as editor of BING magazine. On the plus side, our special guests this year were stateside visitor Russ Rullman and Bing's 'official' UK ambassador, Leslie Gaylor.

As always, Michael Crampton organised the event and chaired the meeting. Russ Rullman brought us greetings from Club Crosby and The Bing Crosby Historical Society and also allowed us to hear an extremely rare 1935 Kraft Music Hall broadcast when Paul Whiteman was still wielding the baton and Bing was about to take over the show. Then Leslie Gaylor gave us several behind the scenes insights into Bing's character as he reminisced about his many meetings when Bing visited the UK. We saw a television programme broadcast in October 1987 in which Leslie was featured because of the work he carried out in keeping Bing's name alive.

Jim Reilly and Rene Chester brought along some video rarities. Between the meeting's 3.00pm start and 10.00 pm finish, we saw clips from the films 'Please' and 'Pennies From Heaven', extracts from Bing6s fateful Pasadena show and other American television specials, the 'Goldilocks' film from 1968, the 'All Star Bond Rally' short and lots more.

The future of the ICC and its magazine BING was resolved and assurances were given that not only would the club continue, but improvements in the magazine would very soon become apparent.

Next year is the 25th annual dinner and also the 40th anniversary of what is now the ICC. The date of October 6th 1990 was inked into diaries by the fifty-plus attending the meeting. It is bound to be a special event and Bob Crosby has expressed strong interest in attending.

As we left the meeting clutching videos, audio tapes, books and John Joyce's most recent club record release, we couldn't help thinking that the Bing scene in the UK is as healthy as ever.

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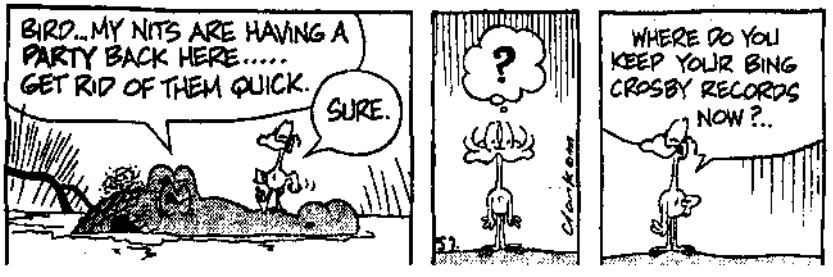

(Supplied by Ben Radley)

Bing Crosby's Son — Why He Killed Himself Just Before Christmas

Bing Crosby's son Lindsay killed himself during the Yuletide season because he couldn't bear facing another Christmas — a holiday that brought back graphic, hated memories of the father he despised.

All his life Lindsay had carried the scars of being physically and emotionally abused as a child by Bing — who often beat him at Christmas.

Everyone revered Bing because of his famous song and movie "White Christmas." So Lindsay once vowed to a friend that if he ever killed himself, he would do it at Christmas - just to show the world what a cad his dad really was.

And on December 21 — less than 24 hours after watching "White Christmas" on TV — 51-year-old Lindsay blew his brains out.

Christmas had always been a bad time for Lindsay. But this year had been the worst of all. He'd been so severely depressed in recent weeks that he had to be hospitalized.

Then, he suffered serious financial setbacks — and finally, a breakup with his girlfriend had left him shattered.

And always, hovering over his tragic life like a black cloud, were his dark depressing memories of Bing.

Said Lindsay's first cousin Carolyn Michels:

"Every time he heard the voice of his father Bing crooning 'White Christmas' - probably the most-heard carol on car radios and in shopping malls — it was another reminder of what a failure his own life had turned out to be.

His brother Dennis recently told me Lindsay felt everything he did, everything he touched, was doomed to fail - and Lindsay dreaded the approach of Christmas with all its pain and sad memories.

"Lindsay felt his whole life was one big colossal waste. Being Bing's son ruined his life."

For Lindsay, there were no White Christmases, only black ones — and he'd even threatened to commit suicide during the holiday season, revealed Robert Slatzer, coauthor of the 1981 biography Bing Crosby - The Hollow Man."

Slatzer told The ENQUIRER, "Lindsay told me a few years ago, 'I hate Christmas because of Pop and I always will. It brings back the pain and fear I suffered as a child.'

"And if I ever do myself in, it will be at Christmastime. That will show the world what I think of Bing Crosby's 'White Christmas.'"

BRUTAL FATHER: Bing's public image of a loving dad hid the awful truth — he beat sons (l. to r.) Phillip, Lindsay, Gary and Dennis till they bled.

Confided Slatzer, a Crosby family friend for many years:

"Lindsay hated his father with a passion. He could never forgive Bing for the way he'd been treated as a child — especially at Christmastime.

"Instead of being a time of joy and love and peace, Bing had made Christmas a time of pain and suffering for Lindsay and his three brothers Gary, Dennis and Phillip.

"During the Christmas holidays Bing often took his boys to his ranch in Elko, Nev., and worked the hell out of them.

"If they didn't do enough work, he would beat them. They lived in fear of those brutal beatings.

"These childhood experiences ruined the holiday season for Lindsay — and scarred him for life.

Bing was cold, distant and imposed harsh rules on his sons — and when they broke those rules, they were beaten until they bled, say insiders. He also constantly belittled the boys, calling them "stupid asses who won't amount to anything."

Lindsay was the most sensitive son — and his dad's abuses and lack of affection hit him the hardest, coloring his entire life.

Said Slatzer: "Lindsay was never able to find happiness. He became a hard-drinking hell-raiser who went from woman to woman and couldn't find peace or success.

"Lindsay once told me: 'People think Bing Crosby personifies the Christmas spirit because he sings "White Christmas." But he was a total phony. He was no Father Christmas — he was a cold, cruel Ebenezer Scrooge.'

"'His meanness and cruelty has dominated my life. And when I hear my old man singing "White Christmas" on the radio, it makes my skin crawl. I have to run out of the room.'"

Incredibly, in recent years Lindsay — who lived in Calabasas, Calif. — often "tortured himself around Christmastime by listening to his father's records," said a close friend — who added: "He was in bad shape, getting more and more depressed."

This year, Lindsay reached his lowest point ever.

For years he'd been a manic-depressive who had to take drugs to keep from going over the edge. But by September he had grown so severely depressed he had to check into a psychiatric hospital for six weeks, said a close friend.

"Lindsay's behavior became more and more bizarre in the past year," the friend confided. "For example, he wouldn't buy anything at the grocery store unless he had a coupon for it — yet he'd often buy a hamburger at a restaurant and leave the waitress a $100 tip."

Then came another blow. Lindsay — a three-time loser in marriage — broke up with his girlfriend, Pam Desnon, because she couldn't stand his bizarre mood swings. They managed a reconciliation, but the relationship remained very rocky.

Lindsay also was having worsening money problems — adding to his depression, says a pal. Even his car recently was repossessed.

"Lindsay had severe money problems. The money from his trust fund was declining due to investments that were not doing well. And he had to split the trust fund income with an ex-wife. He told me, 'I'm in financial ruin.'"

On the night of December 10, Bing's movie "White Christmas" aired on TV.

"Lindsay told his girlfriend Pam he was going to watch it — even though he said he hated it," said a close friend.

And less than 24 hours after watching the movie, Lindsay ended his life by putting a bullet through his brain. The pain had finally ended.

— *ROBERT G. SMITH*

Q. *What's the real reason Lindsay Crosby, Bing Crosby's youngest son by his first wife, Dixie Lee, killed himself recently at age 51? Is it true that Bing disliked all four sons he had by Dixie—Gary, Dennis, Phil and Lindsay?—Alan O'Leary, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

A. "Linny" Crosby shot himself to death in 1989 because he was an alcoholic, a depressive, a failure as a man, husband and father. After learning that the inheritance from his mother, which he relied on to support his family, had become worthless, he took his life in an apartment in Calabasas, Calif. He simply could not face the future without money.

Bing Crosby did not dislike his four sons by singer Dixie Lee as much as he was disappointed in them and subsequently in himself. In 1953 he said of his boys: "One thing I know: I'm going to keep yipping at these little scoundrels until they're 21, and I'm going to demand that they have a goal in life, a purpose. The most tragic spectacle I can think of is that of a young man slipping aimlessly through school, then life, secure in the belief that affluence means happiness. I'm not going to let up on them."

But he did, and when they failed to achieve—in his eyes—success in show business and a variety of commercial ventures, he exacted his revenge. He placed their inheritance in a trust from which they could draw nothing until they reached age 65. Their late mother was not as cruel, but her money ran out last year. Old Bing, however, was a hard-boiled, rigid, intransigent father where his first four offspring were concerned. Ironically, of the four, he liked "Linny" the most.

AP/Wide World

"Linny" at 15 with dad: Bing's boy couldn't face future

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TRADING POST
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Bob Machliss (yes, me), PO Box 422 South Melbourne, Vic, Australia 3205 has purchased a Panasonic N25 VHS video recorder capable of playing NTSC tapes from the USA and Japan over Australian PAL TV and I am interested in buying, trading (or whatever) tapes from those countries. What I really want are first quality copies - not 3rd or 4th generation dubs.

I'm after Bing TV material from any period plus short film appearances, although there are also a couple of feature movies, 'Man On Fire', 'Here Is My Heart', 'Out of This World' and 'Top Of The Morning'.

I'm also interested in famous silent features, early sound movies (really early - late 20s and the start of the 30s), shorts featuring vaudeville entertainers of the period, 'personality' artists, very early Disney cartoons, etc.

Of course, if anyone in the UK can supply similiar material on the PAL system, I would be interested in hearing from you too.

American readers may be interested to learn that an equivalent of the Panasonic L25 is available in your country which can play PAL tapes through and NTSC receiver. If you get one of these machines, then I can supply PAL tapes for you. I have most of Bing's movies plus some TV and other bits and pieces.

NB Want to fax your letter to me? Simply dial 011 613 527 7548!

John Wall, 4 Hustler Court, Mt Waverley, Vic 3149, Australia wants copies of 'How the west was won' and 'Only Forever'. In exchange, he has 'Thoroughly modern Bing', 'Bing & the dixieland bands', 'Return to paradise islands', 'The road begins', 'Accentuate the positive', 'Easy to remember', 'Musical Highlights', 'A little bit of heaven'.

Alternatively, he is prepared to pay Au$50 each for his two wants.

Frank Walsh, Fishing Haven, 30-40 Rivers Rd, Palmers Island, NSW 2460, Aust wants a PAL VHS copy of 'Top of the Morning' and is prepared to pay whatever cost is required or make an exchange if one can be arranged.

Phil Clarke, 21 Stockheath Lane, Havant, Hants PO9 3BU, England has a number of new copies of the book 'My life with Bing' for sale. Cost is £8.00 each plus postage.

Albert Leonard, 27 Lovell House, Shrubland Rd, Hackney, London E8 4NJ, UK, will turn any photograph or picture you care to supply into a pencil drawing. Cost: £9.00. Albert supplied the cover illustration for this and past issues of The Crosby Voice. As you'll agree, he does an excellent job.

Yesterday and Today Records, 255 Church St, Parramatta, NSW (Ph 663 3585) have a good stock of Bing LPs. Well worth a visit, so I'm told.

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ALTERNATE BING CROSBY - A CORRECTION
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From Colin Pugh
To all purchasers of my recently published book - 'Alternate Bing Crosby', I regret to have to draw attention to a serious error that has occurred in one of the entries. I hasten to add that on my third and final proof reading, which I have in book form, this error DOES NOT APPEAR. It must therefore be assumed to be a printers' error.

The entry to which I refer may be found on page 40 under the title 'Face The Music Medley - Part 1 (Soft Lights And Sweet Music). Half-way down the page there are three notes numbered (1); (2); (3). Note (2) should read:-

"Micro re-issues stated as being Take A and Take B - identical to Take B".

Unfortunately, it will be seen that Note (3) has been repeated for Note (2), which, of course, makes absolute nonsense of this section of the entry.

Those not wishing to mutilate their book by writing in the correct information could insert a slip at this page, on which they have typed or printed the amendment.

I am in the process of checking every entry against my collection, the same as any other collector who purchases the book.. This will bring to light any other errors there may be and in the event of such, critical to the meaning and sense of an entry, with the gracious consent and co-operation of the various editors of the Bing magazines around the world, I will report them and advise necessary amendment.

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THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY REPORT
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Ken Twiss has retired as President and Director of the Society to take on the role of President Emeritus. His position as President has been taken over by Caroline Gallacci.

In her first editorial, Caroline wrote:
"In order to continue the tradition of BCHS in Tacoma, I am going to need all your help. I began my term by asking all the Board members what each would like to see BCHS do in the future. I am asking the same question of all of you now. For an organization to be of benefit to all its members, The Board (they represent all of you), must know what it should do. What is most exciting about this entertainment museum is that the City of Tacoma through its Pantages Centre, supports the BCHS. What a marvellous achievement on Ken Twiss's part. He has built a firm, solid foundation. All we have to do is build upon it.

BCHS, PO BOX 216, TACOMA, WASHINGTON 98401 USA.

THE WESTWOOD

MARCHING AND CHOWDER CLUB

. . . PRESENTS . . .

The Midgie Minstrels

Saturday, April 16th, 1938

For One Performance Only

PART THE FIRST

1. Opening Chorus, "Hello, Hello" . . . . . Ensemble
2. Those Girls . . . . . Six bits of feminity
   or 75c worth of "Swannee"
3. "Frivolous Sal" . . . . . sung by Elsie Butler
   with Rita Lowe and her three mocking birds

   Off-Rhythm Boys, "Sailing Down Chesapeak Bay"
4. James Monaco . . . . . The original Ragtime Jimmy
   From red lights to kleig lights
5. "That Ever-lovin' Ziegfeld Follies Baby"
   sung by Kitty Rasch. (class of 1908)
6. Larry Crosby . . . . . The "IT" Boy in "Oh My Garden"
   accompanied by THE Elaine Cooper

   Off-Rhythm Boys, "Sweet Cider Time"
7. "I did it for the Red, White and Blue"
   The Merry Mercers, Ginger and John
8. Jerry Colona . . . . . "The Clean Shaven Fillip"
   Encore, "Louisville Lou" if requested
9. Perry (Union) and Virginia Bodkin
   Two folks and one guitar

10. First Act Finale, "When You Wore a Tulip", Ensemble

Crackerjack, large peanuts and exceptional popcorn sold between the acts by David Butler, concessionaire. Very good prizes too.

PART THE SECOND

1. The Natchez Sunshine Four .....in "Bits and Tidbits" "Jungle Town"
2. Lee & Burke, or Burke & Lee ..... Dixie and Johnny in a potpourri of Chatter, Patter and Ja-Da
3. Ray Mayer .....The Masked Musical Marvel Demonstrates his latest invention THE PIANOLA
4. Bessie Patterson .....A Lass and a Lasso!

Off-Rhythm Boys singing "Dearie Please Don't Be Angry"

5. Joe Venuti ..... The jiving alligator, or a bit of burp accompanied by Sally
6. Bing Crosby* ..... Refreshments served gratis in lobby during recital
7. A lull
8. Pat O'Brien .....A bit of very old Erin
9. The Yacht Club Boys .....Why?
10. Dr. William Sexton .....For Men Only

Off-Rhythm Boys (now hoarse) singing "Coney Island Baby"

11. Edmund Lowe ..... And away we go!
12. Finale "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee" Entire Company

The above program, subject to change with plenty of notice. No money refunded once the curtain goes up. If it goes up.

Herb Polesie
Interlocutor, and
ticket taker

END MEN
John Mercer Joe Venuti

*By courtesy of the Emanuel Cohen Minstrels.

THE EMPEROR WALTZ

Bing goes Johann Strauss —with improving flourishes

THE doctor bends over the delicate, nervous, pedigreed black poodle named Scheherazade, a mighty, mighty unhappy little puppy dog—lovesick, she is, at the moment.

"It is important," the doctor says, "that the patient speak anything in her mind, anything at all. We need the complete stream of consciousness."

As the pup's royal owners flutter around solicitously, the doctor admonishes them to stand back.

"Please," he says, "this is a very serious case. Indubitably a psychoneurosis, sometimes also referred to as a neuropsychosis.

"Now," he says, turning back to the pup, "now I must ask for your earliest recollections. Your father and mother -was their home life congenial?"

The pup moans.

The doctor says, "In other words, you were the witness of ugly scenes? Your father used to bark at your mother? Think! Remember! Was it because your father took the bone away from your mother? Remember!"

The pup moans again.

This touching scene gives you a clue to the sort of movie The Emperor Waltz is. Only, how can cold words convey the moving quality of the love calls Bing Crosby yodels against a Tirolean background from which the echo comes back in a lovely female voice?

Crosby is a brash American, intent on selling a newfangled contraption called the phonograph to the Emperor of Austria. The year is 1910.

There's a girl in the piece (surprise, surprise). Her name is Johanna Augusta Franziska, Countess von Stolzenberg-Stolzenberg, of Stolzenberg-Stolzenberg Strasse, Vienna. But you will recognize her, in spite of her *décolletage*, as Joan Fontaine. Crosby, the bold creature, just calls her "Honey Countess," and this makes her very, very lovesick, like the pup.

As the plot works out, the royal pooch gets together with an unpedigreed American canine (name of Buttons) -the trade-mark dog in "His Master's Voice," and Crosby gets together with, etc.

This is the species of *whimsey* with which Hollywood can and often does put its foot in it. But not this time. With Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder as co-authors and, respectively, producer and director, everything is carefree, Technicolored, tuneful and utterly unsignificant.

A. P.

1 Salesman Bing Crosby gets his comeuppance at the hands of Austrian gendarmes [illegible] throw his infernal machine, a 1910 phonograph, into the palace pool

2. The aristocratic pooch Scheherazade feigns indifference as the countess (Joan Fontaine) and her bankrupt father plot a royal canine match for her

"We didn't mean it," Crosby assures [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the snobbiest poodle in [illegible] royal heart is about to begin

4 Love blooms in the Tirol—but Crosby, phonograph drummer, is in disgrace: the blare of his machine scared a deer the emperor was about to shoot

Joan's mother and father [illegible] the poodle [illegible] the royal poodle [illegible] of [illegible]

6 Oh, the shame of it—white mongrel pups born to a pureblood poodle. Joan Fontaine is the only one who can smile: she [illegible] by love

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BING'S SERMON
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Bing on the plight of former boxers, broadcast March 29, 1955

"Mr Budd Schullberg, he's the fella who wrote 'The Disenchanted' and also 'What Makes Sammy Run', 'The Harder They Fall', 'Some Faces In The Crowd' and has been nominated for an Academy Award for his screenplay for the picture 'On The Waterfront, has also written an article in a recent issue of Sports Illustrated that elicited quite a bit of interest out of me.

Mr Schullberg says, and I couldn't agree with him more, that the fight game ought to borrow a page from the theatre or the film industry. It ought to organise some programme of constructive aid for boxing veterans who gave freely, perhaps a little too freely, of their blood and their courage and their skills when they were at their prime, but who have since run out of help, money, eyesight, co-ordination and maybe hope.

It is a pretty dismal picture, isn't it? But in the big population centres are frequently found these pitiful derelicts, going from pillar to post, picking up what charity they can, or in some cases, winding up in public institutions. Now I don't want to mention names or case histories, but anyone who has followed the boxing game and who is at all interested in what happens to its veterans, I am sure that they can recall plenty of instances of such deplorable situations.

Most of these men after all were great public figures and very popular. They gave lots of entertainment and lots of thrills to the sports fans, and gee, they're entitled to a little better I think than just a cold dismissal when their usefulness has departed. Now Budd Schullberg has a great idea there but it's going to be very difficult to put over I'm afraid. He suggested that some small percentage of the gate of major shows and television receipts for the covering of fights should be turned over to a fund which would set up facilities to take care of these ex-fighters who are no longer able to take care of themselves. It's a splendid idea and I'd certainly do anything I could to make it come to pass.

A memorial hospital could be erected where named fighters and club fighters, fellas who lost the battle of life, where they could find some refuge and some medical care and some psychological assistance too - some assurance that they hadn't been forgotten, hadn't been abandoned.

I certainly applaud Budd Schullberg's idea enthusiastically. I like boxing but as we all know, sometimes it's in the hands of wicked and avaricious men. There's virtually no unanimity of principle, and as Budd Schullberg says, it would take somebody like Jack Dempsey or Joe Louis to head up an outfit who could get the various organisations to working in concert on an effective programme to raise the money needed for this highly laudatory project.

Of course, I think a lot of the trouble could be averted if boxing commissions in the various states would be a little more rigid and discriminatory in issuing licenses to fighters. Seems to me that when a fella's been boxing in preliminary bouts for a couple of years and he's

shown absolutely no ability which would indicate that he has an opportunity to go on up to the top to win the big purses or to be a contender, then the boxing commission ought to call in such a boxer and tell him that his potential is not appreciable and that if he continues fighting, it's only going to result in permanent impediment to his health. They ought to pick up his license. This policy could apply to any fighter, even a main-eventer who's over the hill and, who every time he fights, is undergoing further brain injury. His condition can be accurately determined by competent medical examiners and he should be refused further license to box.

But failing this, I think that Budd Schullberg has certainly latched onto a wonderful thing - a great idea - a think I'm sure that all fight fans would be eager to support. I heartily endorse the idea of the plan and I want to go on record and making myself available for a donation or for any other participation that anybody connected with the proposed programme thinks would be helpful.

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WHO'S THIS? This picture, supplied by Joe Sinnott, is of Bing's brother Bob (baked by the Bob Cats), taken on his 76th birthday at Hunter Mountain, New York State.

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I could have kept this issue of The Crosby Voice going for another dozen pages. However, sanity and cost constraints compel me to end it here. Unfortunately, this means that I can't include an article on a man who is doing a great job keeping the Crosby name alive in the USA. His name is Ernest Sutkowski and his company, The Westchester Business Institute sponsors a 30 minute Crosby show three nights a week over WRTN, 93.5FM in New York. (7.00 pm - Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.)

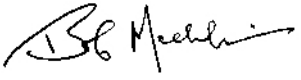
In addition, Ernest is a prolific letter writer to the right people and one of his letters was the acknowledged inspiration for the article by Didier Deutshc UNEQUALLED STYLE which appears in this issue.

Ernest also conducts a regular correspondence with Andy McKaie of MCA Records (70 Universal City Plaza, Universal City, California 91608) in an endeavour to get that company to issue more of the vast collection of Crosby records in the vaults on CD. I have a file of letters between Ernest and Andy dating back to mid-last year and I had hoped to publish some of them here, but this will have to wait until next issue.

In the meantime, keep up the good work Ernest.

And that's where we'll have to end the Crosby Voice for now. I hope that you've enjoyed this mammoth issue.

Best wishes to all,



Crosby's ghost will stroll sidewalks of New York!

I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS SAYS BING!

Bing Crosby has been dead a dozen years — but the super crooner has vowed to return to Earth on Christmas Day!

"I spoke with Bing in the great beyond, and he told me in no uncertain terms, 'I'll be home for Christmas.'" says Swedish psychic **Sylvia Lindgren.**

"He was very serious. He said, 'I miss so many, many things at Christmas. I just want to come back and see it all one more time.'

"I'm going to stroll down the streets of New York City and listen to the laughter and the music and get that special feeling all over again. If people see me there, they shouldn't be surprised.'"

Psychic Sylvia, long renowned for her ability to communicate with the spirit world, said Bing also told her he may have a big surprise in store for some dear old pals.

"Bing's eyes were absolutely twinkling," Sylvia said. "He told me, 'Some friends of mine may think they've lost their minds when they sit down for Christmas dinner this year.